ENCOUNTER

edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* IRVING KRISTOL

MARCH 1957. VOL. VIII. NO. 3

Published monthly at Panton House 25 Haymarket London SW1
3s. 0d. per number. Yearly subscription 36s. : U S & Canada $7.00 : India 12 rupees
U S and Canadian subscriptions may be entered at British Publications Inc.
30 East 60th Street New York 22

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The illustrations for the article by A. J. P. Taylor, and the cover picture, are by L. S. Lowry

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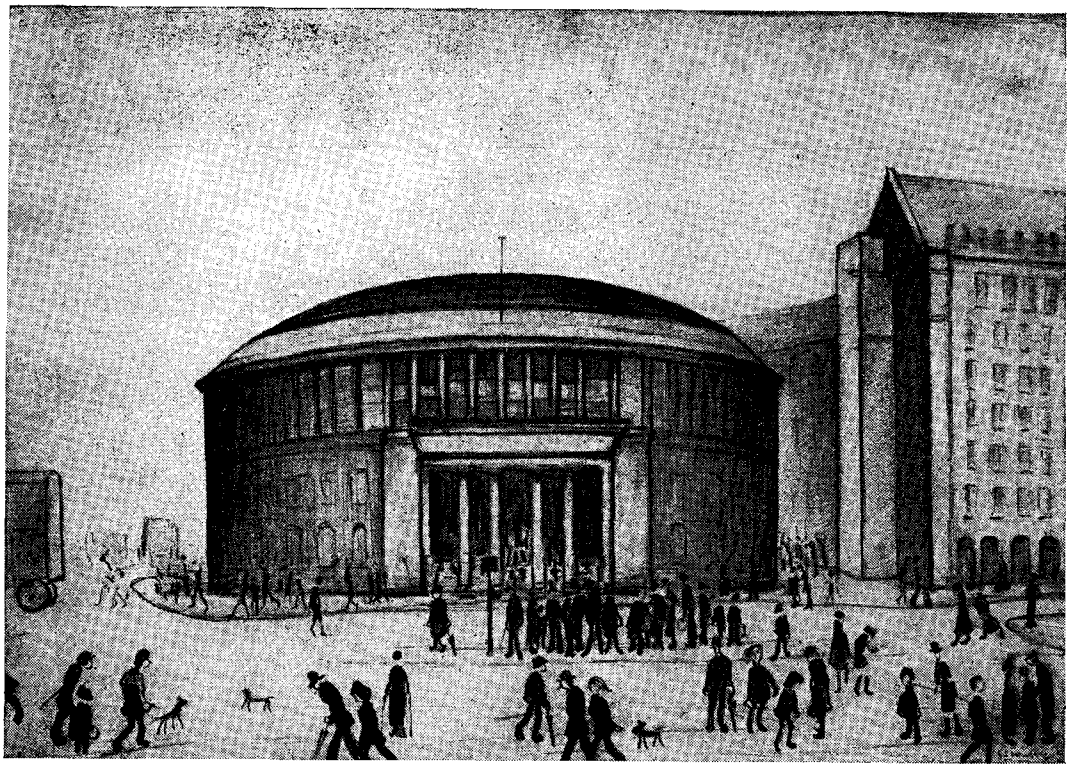

The World's Cities (I)

A. J. P. Taylor: MANCHESTER

WHEN I recall the great cities of Europe, I see myself first of all clambering in and out of a motor-coach on a conducted tour. Some of them later became places to live in, to belong to; but they began as sights. Not so Manchester. There are no conducted tours; no waiting coaches in Albert Square or touting guides in Piccadilly. Yet Manchester is as distinctive in its way as Athens or Peking. It is the symbol of a civilisation which was, until recently, an ambition of mankind, though now little more than an historical curiosity. Manchester is the only English city that can look London in the face, not merely as a regional capital, but as a rival version of how men should live in a community. I do not know how Piccadilly, Manchester, got its name. Maybe it was a gesture of piety, but I prefer to think of it as an act of defiance or even contempt, a joke at the expense of Piccadilly Circus. There is no satisfactory English word for what Manchester represents. If "Burgher" were genuinely acclimatised, instead of being restricted to Carlisle and Calais, that would do. Manchester is the last and greatest of the Hanseatic towns—a civilisation created by traders without assistance from monarchs or territorial aristocracy.

Manchester is, however, older and—in some ways—nicer than *das Manchestertum*. It was incorporated only in 1838 and was not represented in the unreformed Parliament. Hence we think of it casually as a new town,

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a mushroom growth of the industrial revolution. This is not so. It was an historical accident that Manchester remained a private manor instead of becoming a borough. Even in the Middle Ages it was a bigger town than many places which had two representatives in Parliament; and by the 18th century it was already the commercial centre of Lancashire. Indeed Manchester is older still. It had a Roman foundation, though not worth lingering on. The fragment of wall in a goods-yard at the bottom of Deansgate ranks as the least interesting Roman remain in England, which is setting a high standard. The market-town of pre-industrial times, however, survived almost intact until Hitler's war. The collegiate church, Cheetham's hospital, the old grammar school, and the market-place stood unchanged, as they had been before the steam engine was thought of. You could still recapture the Manchester of de Quincey or imagine the scene at the market-cross when Prince Charlie passed through on the road to Derby. Still, this too is antiquarianism. It would be perverse to visit Manchester solely to discover what it was like before the Burghers took over.

The most revealing spot in Manchester is not the historic centre, not even the Royal Exchange, but Victoria Park. This is still a private estate, with toll-gates and keepers in uniform. Gothic palaces jostle each other; gardeners dust the soot from the leaves of the trees; and the ghosts of merchant princes walk in the twilight. These were the men who gave Manchester its historical character. We think of them in retrospect as Radicals; and so they were in lack of respect for traditional authority or in their ruthless destruction of whatever stood in their way. But they were far from a belief in economic equality or even in democracy, if we mean by that putting the needs of the majority first. They had succeeded by their own energy; and they supposed that the duty of society was discharged if it gave others the chance to do the same. It did not worry them that, while the rich man was in his mansion, the poor man at the gates of Victoria Park lived in a slum. The road to success lay open for those who wished to take it. Like the men of the Renaissance they exalted the individual. They lacked one Renaissance characteristic. Of all dominant classes, they were the least equipped with æsthetic taste. Perhaps Money is less beautiful than Intrigue or Wickedness—the Renaissance routes to power; or perhaps it is so beautiful in itself as to destroy the need for beauty elsewhere. At any rate, the result is the same: Manchester is irredeemably ugly. There is no spot to which you could lead a blindfold stranger and say happily: "Now open your eyes." Norman Douglas had a theory that English people walked with their eyes on the ground so as to avoid the excrement of dogs on the pavement. The explanation in Manchester is simpler: they avert their eyes from the ugliness of their surroundings.

THE great days of Manchester certainly came at a bad time from an architectural point of view, but Manchester comes off badly even by its own standards. It has nothing to compare with St. Pancras Station or Keble College. The town hall and the older part of the university are in a rigid Gothic which looks as though it had been bought by the square yard. The remarkable feature of the Midland Hotel is the colour of its brick, not its design. More recent buildings keep the same quality of grandiose tastelessness. It would of course be useless for the Central Library to challenge the pre-eminence of the new Bodleian as the most hideous library in existence; but it would win an honourable mention. Apart from being out of tune with its surroundings, it is remarkable for presenting an exact model of an iced wedding-cake on a gigantic scale. One expects members of the library committee to emerge on high at any moment and cut it into slices. There is also a striking civic building which now fills the gap between the library and the town hall. This tones down their irreconcilable contrast by being itself in a style alleged to be Dutch domestic of the 17th century.

The ugliness is not only on the outside of the buildings. Some of the great mansions are comfortable within, though not many; none is pleasing. This character too has been main-

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tained to the present. The professors of the University are accommodated in bare cells with prison furniture; while their common-room attains the impersonal comfort of a modern waiting-room at a Continental station. The Midland Hotel once had a Palm Court of unique Oriental style—I remember a Frenchwoman who used to escape from Manchester merely by sitting there. Now it has vanished; and the Midland has an ordinary cosmopolitan interior like the new House of Commons. The City Art Gallery has a lot of expensive pictures but few good ones: even the pre-Raphaelites seem to have lost colour. The people, too, are remarkably unattractive in appearance. When I was a lecturer at Manchester, I used to peer along the serried rows of note-takers in the hope of finding a pretty girl. The only one I ever spotted turned out to be an Italian visitor. No doubt Puritanism makes the women dress so badly. The stunted growth of men and women alike is said to be due either to their Danish ancestors who settled in the Mersey valley or to the long hours spent by more recent forebears in the cotton factories. I doubt both explanations. Men adapt themselves to their surroundings, as Americans for instance develop crinkly hair and thick lips; and the people of Manchester are anxious to show that they are devoted to the Business of life, not its Art. Manchester is also very dirty—the soot continuously dropping from home fires which are more thickly concentrated than anywhere else in the world. The climate rounds off the gloom—not remarkably rainy as is often alleged, but persistently moist which is even more depressing. There are times when it seems merely wrongheaded to call Manchester the centre of a civilisation.

But it is. Manchester has everything except good looks, or had until recently. Though the Burghers have gone, their independent spirit remains. Manchester is the only place in England which escapes our characteristic vice of snobbery. Manchester cares no more for the Royal Family and the landed gentry than Venice did for the Pope and the Italian aristocracy. When patrons are wanted for a charity or a club, they are found among the few remaining rich, and these are without titles. The only exception is the Earl of Derby, who has a special position as the decorative leader of Lancashire. There are few royal statues in Manchester—only the Prince Consort in Albert Square and Queen Victoria in Piccadilly. The others are local dignitaries or Liberal statesmen. Many of the Burghers were German in origin; and having shaken off subservience to their own authorities felt no awe of any other. They sent their sons to Rugby, not to Eton; and this produced highmindedness, not snobbery. Achievement is what matters in Manchester, not a historic name or a cultivated accent. It is an added advantage, of course, that Manchester is in Lancashire and can have its own way of speaking without anyone worrying about it. Manchester is not the best type of Lancashire accent—you have to go to Bury or Rochdale for that; but it is a great improvement on the flat talk of Liverpool.

MANCHESTER could not have been so independent without a region behind it; though I suspect that Manchester has shaped Lancashire much more than the other way round. Of course Lancashire is quite a place—with the best country in the world to my mind, and the nicest people. Cultivated Englishmen who never go further than Stratford-on-Avon or perhaps Lichfield regard all "the North" as one in character and scenery—hard, bleak, rugged. Yorkshiremen are hard all right—living in stone houses and sharpened by the east wind. But the Pennines are a truer frontier than the Trent or the Mersey; and Lancashire people are the very opposite from those in Yorkshire. This is the land of the south-west wind, bringing an atmosphere that is always blurred and usually gentle. The men are independent without being aggressive; tolerant, affectionate, sentimental—almost mawkish. Balzac describes Lancashire as "the county where women die of love." I think this very unlikely. I have always assumed, though with little firsthand experience, that Lancashire women are as brisk and businesslike in love-

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making as in everything else. The men provide the romantic atmosphere. It delights them to imagine that the women die of love. In reality a Lancashire woman would merely reply: "Come on, lad. Let's get it over!"

The men of Lancashire are great tale-tellers. The last great writer in the vernacular, T. Thompson (a bookbinder from Bury), combined the sentimental and the humorous into works of high art; but I've heard many a story almost as good in a public-house corner. Northern people in every country like to think of themselves as more honest and straightforward than those further south. They may be honest in Lancashire; they are certainly not straightforward. They are one and all "romancers." I don't think that my father ever gave my mother a strictly accurate account of his doings in all their many years of married life, even if he had only been out of the house for half an hour. A fictitious narrative was more interesting to him and, he hoped, to her. But also he was like a man with a lisp: things were bound to come out reshaped however truthful he meant to be. In much the same way the inhabitants romanticise Manchester and themselves. Their softheartedness runs over in the most unlikely places. Harry Pollitt, former Communist leader, revealed his Manchester origin when, kidnapped by Fascists, he spent the weekend playing solo whist with his captors. Left to themselves, the people of Lancashire would have gone on believing in witches and clinging to a hazy Jacobitism as they did in the 18th century. It was the "foreigners" of Manchester—Germans, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews—who prodded them into zestful life; also romantic in their way, but without the easy-going Lancashire spirit.

MANCHESTER is truly a frontier-town, as Professor Toynbee thinks every successful capital should be. It is squeezed into the south-eastern corner of Lancashire right up against the Pennines. The frontier with Yorkshire, which I have mentioned already, is the sharpest. As a boy, I always felt that the dark tunnel at Victoria Station which took me to school at York was the beginning of an alien world; and I am still surprised not to see Customs officials on the platform as they are at Salzburg. But Manchester also straddles between Lancashire and Cheshire. The Mersey is no true dividing line. South Manchester is an extension of the Cheshire Plain. The real break comes exactly down the middle of St. Ann's Square. There can be no doubt as you move north from it that you are in real Lancashire country. The division is economic as well as geographical. There are no mills in Cheshire though there used to be—except some that remain in Stockport which is a sort of Lancastrian colony. For that matter, commerce has carried the day in Manchester itself. The mills have all been pushed further north. There are engineering works and industries of every variety, but no mills. All the same, cotton still dominates the city as it did when Manchester was first called Cottonopolis. The Royal Exchange occupies the most central position in the city—a position which its appearance does nothing to deserve. The most characteristic sight in Manchester until just the other day was the great horse-dray, slowly carrying bales of cotton to the warehouses. Like all traders, the merchants of Manchester have time to spare or at any rate to chaffer; and they sit for hours at a time in underground cafés playing dominoes. A thorough grounding in advanced dominoes was, I think, the only useful instruction I received from my father.

Cotton is a nice industry to spring from and to live among. The making and selling of cotton is one of the few human activities which is wholly beneficent. It never did anyone harm and it has done mankind much good. Every piece of cotton cloth is going to make someone warmer or cleaner or more comfortable. You don't have to conquer people in order to turn them into your customers; and you suffer no imperialist craving to control your own raw materials. The cotton trade conspires with the climate to make the inhabitants of Manchester a kindly people, inclined perhaps to rather simple solutions, but gentle and sensible. It is no doubt foolish to believe that cotton cloth contains the secret

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of human happiness; but it is at any rate less foolish than to believe it of motor-cars or machine-guns. Even the local vice of gambling in cotton-futures seems somehow a less speculative proposition than running after stocks and shares; though many members of Lancashire families have discovered that this is a mistaken view. Cotton itself has turned out a chancy affair ever since the First World War; and Manchester has lost something of its special character as cotton lost its pre-eminence. But enough remains; much as we still regard Oxford as an academic town though comparatively few of its inhabitants now make a living from learned pursuits.

MANCHESTER grew great as a centre of business; and its other distinctions have come, as it were, by accident. It would be silly to pretend anything else. If you think that buying and selling is a wicked affair in the way many people do when they are comfortably off—as Marx did once Engels was rich enough to provide for him—then Manchester will not win forgiveness by its other activities. Once admit that a civilisation can be founded on commerce, and everything takes on an acceptable pattern. Manchester society wanted solid worth. The houses were well-built, the women plump, the food substantial. There has never been much in the nature of public show in Manchester—no idiocy of a Lord Mayor's banquet, for instance. Private hospitality on the other hand was lavish. The great houses gave dinner-parties to twenty or thirty guests as a normal routine. I used to go to one such house where, only twenty years ago, each male guest received on arrival a card with the name of the lady whom he was to take into dinner; we went in formal procession arm-in-arm. On the other hand that detestable rigmarole of the men sitting over the port was no more than a utilitarian survival; it broke up as the flush of the lavatory died away. There was no nostalgia, as there is in gentry-circles, for the common-rooms of Oxford. The women counted for as much as the men—particularly of course the woman who had a fortune of her own.

A society based on money has the great merit of freedom from class. The only difference between the very rich in Manchester and the moderately well-off, or between the moderately well-off and the skilled artisan, was in the amount they spent. All lived on the same pattern, though not on the same scale. The professors of the University and the leading figures on the *Manchester Guardian* also gave grand dinner-parties to a rather smaller company. Samuel Alexander had eight or ten to dinner every week almost until his death—among the most agreeable evenings I ever spent. The thought of Samuel Alexander makes me feel that I have been unfair to Manchester civilisation—stressed too much its devotion to money and business. Alexander, too, was a representative figure—also a foreigner (in his case an Australian Jew) who could never have penetrated ordinary English society, but became fully at home in Manchester. How much at home could be seen at the Hallé Concerts on a Thursday evening, when he sat among the very rich in the front row and read the *Manchester Guardian*, with much rustling of leaves, during the pieces that did not interest him. These were frequent.

The Hallé Concerts were the highest expression of Manchester civilisation. Most of the audience were regular subscribers who occupied the same seats year after year. When they changed, it was to move up in the price-list—not in the social scale—until they arrived with the Burghers in the front rows. But the whole audience was a single community, with personal acquaintanceship running from the front rows to the standing room at the back. The orchestra belonged to this community also. Its members greeted their friends in the Hall; and the conductor himself gave a little bow of recognition to the more distinguished citizens. For after all, this was the one genuinely permanent orchestra in England, with the only permanent conductor. In the Free Trade Hall on a Thursday evening, I had no reason to regret my season ticket to the Vienna Philharmonic. Under Richter, the orchestra, I suspect, had been heavily Germanic; and there was still

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too much Brahms for my taste. But Harty gave us also the new and the unusual to an extent greater than we get now from the Third Programme of the BBC. In other ways the Hallé Concerts were agreeably old-fashioned. The society was technically "owned" by the £100 guarantors until, in the thirties, economic need forced a democratic revolution and admitted an inferior class—with inferior rights—of those who could only guarantee £10. The programmes gave the precise duration of each piece in the margin; and one waited eagerly to see whether the conductor would break his previous record. Patrons were also informed when carriages should be ordered; while the announcement of a Special Concert Train from Central Station consoled the less opulent.

The Free Trade Hall itself had a special claim to fame, though not from its architecture. It stood on St. Peter's Fields, where the battle of Peterloo began the break-up of the old order in England. Its name announced the greatest victory against that order. Other great halls in England are called after a royal patron, or some figure of traditional religion. Only the Free Trade Hall is dedicated, like the United States of America, to a proposition—one as noble and beneficent as any ever made. Richard Cobden formulated it in the words: "As little intercourse as possible between Governments; as much intercourse as possible between the peoples of the world." It was difficult to sit in the Free Trade Hall, and still more difficult to speak from its platform (as I once did), without recalling its political significance. The men of Manchester had brought down the nobility and gentry of England in a bloodless, but decisive, Crécy. The Free Trade Hall was the symbol of their triumph.

MANCHESTER looked at southern England in Cobden's spirit. It cared little for what was going on "down there." London was not expected to provide either ideas or material direction. Manchester had its own daily newspaper of international reputation and, for that matter, its own Sunday journals of somewhat different character. It had too in the *Clarion* the best Socialist paper ever produced in this country. It had its own banks and, as well, a branch of the Bank of England. It had its own University—not a "civic" or "provincial" Redbrick, but a rival version to Oxford and Cambridge of what a national University should be. Its founder revolted against the monopoly of the Church of England. The only conditions he insisted on were that there should be no chapel and no denominational tests, even for the professors of theology. His trustees added the condition of no discrimination between the sexes. The University followed the models in Scotland and Germany, not of the Anglican institutions further south. The example had its drawbacks. The professors reigned over a crowd of helot-lecturers. But I never knew anyone at Manchester who owed his place to good manners, high-born connections, education at an expensive public school, or the right accent; and anyone who has ever heard Great Tom sound his hundred-and-one strokes will admit that this was quite an achievement. Fifty years ago or so, when Rutherford, Tout, Alexander, and George Unwin were in their prime, Manchester University had no rival in intellectual distinction.

With all these advantages, Manchester had good reason to be self-sufficient, though not self-satisfied. Nor was it parochial except in the sense that its parish was the world. The great men of Manchester had family connections with Germany and the Near East. They shipped cotton cloth to India and China; and often spent some years there as representatives of their firms. They owned mills in Russia, Austria, and South America. The Ship Canal completed the picture when it made Manchester a world port. Only one part of the world was unknown to them: England south of the Trent. Why should they ever want to go there? They had a wonderful seacoast on their doorstep—Blackpool for the masses, Southport always more genteel. The Lake District was only eighty miles away; North Wales even nearer. They could slip off for an afternoon to Old Trafford or spend an agreeable summer's day in the Peak District. Every

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Sunday in the thirties saw a mass exodus from London Road Station to Kinder Scout; but the struggle which won a right-of-way over Jacob's Ladder was fought as long ago as 1894. For Manchester men England ended at Buxton or at Matlock. My grandfather, I think, never went further south in his life except once on his way to France. My father had been in Egypt and India; he knew Russia and most countries in Western Europe. He spent exactly three days in London, and hated them. This was not plain dislike of a city, for he worked in one. He felt that London was the enemy; it represented everything he disapproved of and which he supposed, perhaps wrongly, that Manchester had defeated.

Was my father right, or has Manchester now been defeated in its turn? What remains of the Burghers and their civilisation? I went back recently after an absence of nearly twenty years and looked with full consciousness at the things I had previously taken for granted. To start with looks. Manchester is quite as ugly as people say. In fact it has got uglier. I don't much mind the 19th-century squalor, though it is only fit for a museum; but the recent buildings are worse. Parts of Manchester are now as bad as Queen Street, Oxford, which has few rivals in England. What is more depressing, this is not Manchester ugliness; it is the architecture of Mr. Everyman, and I begin to regret the ugliness that was peculiar to Manchester. Character is fading in other ways. My former impressions of Manchester was of double-decker trams in blocks half a mile long. Now they are gone; and the buses make Manchester look like anywhere else. Their disappearance has one advantage. All the streets have the opulent width of a capital city.

I could produce much more in the way of nostalgia. The professional entertainer is disappearing from the public houses. There are "concerts" on licensed premises now only once a week; and even these are few and far between. The oyster bars are being smartened up in the modern way. Jolly red-faced women no longer consume stout and oysters with uproarious laughter. Instead there is an air of elegant fatigue; and prices have gone up correspondingly. One house of the old style survives in the Shambles, where the rich food is slapped down on bare boards and no one worries about his appearance. The decline of the tripe-shop is sadder still. You have to search hard now for a plate of tripe-and-onions in a back-room, where you used to find it on every corner. Lancashire cheese, almost the county's finest possession, is now made in factories and has lost much of its flavour. Manchester never got the best of it, but I doubt whether perfect cheese can be found even in the Fylde. Yet there must still be rich eating in Manchester. The food shops in the remaining fragment of the Market Place display a richness and variety unknown in southern England. The University remains the dishonourable exception that it always was. The food in its refectory would close a factory the same afternoon if it were served in a workers' canteen.

In other ways the University is changing its character. It is much richer than it was. New buildings are going up all the time; the staff is larger and better paid. But it has given up the struggle against Oxford and Cambridge which its founder enjoined on it. Instead it seeks to imitate them; and, as an imitation, naturally slips into the second rank. The strongest feature of Manchester University originally was its close link with the local community. Most of its students used to live at home. Now it is perversely aspiring towards halls of residence, which will echo our ancient and deplorable colleges. Our enlightened educational policy also works, unexpectedly, to the detriment of the newer universities. Before the war, poverty kept many first-class students from Oxford and Cambridge, even when they won scholarships. Now the means test operates only against the professional classes who would not send their children to Manchester in any case; and the intellectual level is going down. No one, I think, could claim for Manchester University the pre-eminence that it enjoyed fifty years ago.

Shortage of money has hit the John

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Rylands Library, which is probably the greatest private library in England. It is still an incomparable place to work in, with no other readers to disturb your peace. The absence of readers, by the way, is fortunate; for the architect, in the usual perverse way of his profession, forgot to provide for them. They have to be accommodated in nooks and crannies, some, one suspects, reserved for readers long dead. What the library now lacks is money to buy books; and no new benefactor is likely to present himself. Already there is a touch of the Sleeping Beauty as you mount the Gothic staircase. Some venturesome visitor of the future will find librarian, staff, books, and a single reader plunged in sleep for a hundred years. By then the building may be all that is left of historic Manchester.

THE streets outside have a bustle and prosperity, astonishing to one who remembers the depression twenty years ago. But it is the sort of bustle and prosperity that might be anywhere. The local speech is dying; it will have gone within a generation. "Regionalism" means only that some radio and television programmes and the northern editions of some papers are produced in Manchester as a matter of convenience. They are no different from what is produced elsewhere. The *Manchester Guardian* itself has ceased to represent Manchester except in name. Everyone says rightly that it has never been better. It is the only newspaper produced outside London to be included in every national survey along with such lesser organs as the *Daily Express* and *The Times*. But it is now a national paper pure and simple. Fifty years ago, the City Council was reported in more detail than the House of Commons; Montague and Monkhouse wrote at great length on the local theatre; Langford at even greater on the Hallé Concerts. James Bone sat alone in the London office and wrote the London Letter unaided. Now all is changed. The London office provides most of the paper. It has a political correspondent, a parliamentary correspondent, a scientific correspondent, a diplomatic correspondent, and a London editor with a large staff of reporters. Only the leaders are written in Manchester; and even this is being sapped—at least two leader-writers are now stationed in London. A. P. Wadsworth often edited the paper from the London office—a thing which never happened in C. P. Scott's time. When Scott visited London to expostulate with Sir Edward Grey or Lloyd George, it was as the leader of Manchester liberalism, not as the editor of a national paper. Now the editor plays little part in local politics.

The *Manchester Guardian* now speaks for the enlightened everywhere, not for Manchester. When it went against public opinion during the Boer War, it lost circulation generally. During the recent crisis over Suez, it lost readers in Manchester and gained about twice as many from other parts of the country. I look forward to the announcement: "Practically nobody in Manchester reads the *Guardian*." The moment of divorce is fast approaching: sooner or later (and I would guess sooner) the *Manchester Guardian* will be printed in London. British Railways can carry no more of the London edition; and the paper, which has trebled its circulation in recent years, is missing thousands of readers only because it cannot reach them in time. When this great change comes, the citizens of Manchester will lose their last advantage, one which they have done little to deserve: they will no longer be the only ones to read a *Guardian* at breakfast with real news—new news—on the front page. They ceased to be able to read local news long ago.

THE readers of the *Manchester Guardian* have no particular wish to be told what is going on in Manchester. What is more, very little is going on to tell them about. The local theatre began to decline when Miss Horniman withdrew her support during the First World War. Now it is dead except for an occasional piece being tried out before its London run—and even then Manchester is lucky if it can get in ahead of Blackpool. Nobody makes great political speeches at the Free Trade Hall. Only the Hallé Concerts remain in their glory—still the best series in

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England, still the only genuinely permanent orchestra with its own conductor. The audience is now so large that the concerts have to be given two nights running, though only every fortnight instead of once a week. In these audiences Manchester is still alive. The circle of civilisation has indeed widened. The Hallé Orchestra also gives concerts at Belle Vue on a Sunday afternoon among the popular entertainments and the animals.

There is one reservation. The members of the audience no longer think about the Special Concert Train from Central Station; but most of them are going to be carried far from Manchester by bus or car. Like the Russian soldiers in 1917, they have voted with their feet. They have voted against Manchester and run away. This withdrawal has been going on a long time. I once heard the late Sir John Clapham describe how as a boy he lived in the centre of Manchester; when the family went away for a week or so, the domestic servant was locked in the house with a supply of provisions. By the beginning of this century the wealthy had all moved to Withington and Fallowfield; soon after they reached Didsbury and Whalley Range. Now they have evacuated into Cheshire. And not only the wealthy. The City Council has cleared the slum areas of Hulme and Ancoats, and has resettled the inhabitants in Wythenshawe, ten miles off. This is part of Manchester only in name. The writing of doom became clearer still just the other day. The great store of Finnegans, which has been in Deansgate for more than a century, allowed its lease to run out and moved itself bodily to Wilmslow far off in Cheshire. If this goes on, central Manchester will soon offer offices, warehouses, and vast stretches of desolation. You can already stand in the districts cleared of slums and feel as solitary as in the Sahara; only the rows of street-lamps remind you that human beings once lived here. The destruction of German bombing has not been rebuilt. What was once the Market Place is now a vast car-park, crammed during the day, deserted at night, with dirty paper ankle-deep. The effect is like a mouth from which most of the teeth have been extracted. The Cathedral stands in refurbished isolation. It certainly has been restored—in such a polished manner that, whereas previously the Rylands Library looked like the Cathedral, now the Cathedral looks like the Rylands Library.

Manchester might keep alive without its centre. The decline of Didsbury and the other suburbs is a graver matter. The merchant princes have departed. They are playing at country life in Cheshire or trying to forget Manchester in Bournemouth and Torquay. There are no more dinner-parties, no more bustle of social occasions. Some of the great houses have become private hotels; some are the headquarters of insurance companies or trade unions—an ironical turn of the wheel. A few have been broken up into flats. For this they are highly unsuitable. The grand rooms are too big; and the fortunate flat-dwellers are those who find accommodation in the attics. Some of these mansions may have found another use. When I asked my friends what had happened to the Burgher palaces, I always received the same answer: "Brothels." I cannot vouch for this from experience, and suspect another touch of Lancashire romanticism. Manchester men have always liked to think that their city was great in vice as in everything else. My father told me that no decent woman could be in Oxford Street after five o'clock in the afternoon, indeed that no one could walk down it, so thick were the whores on the pavement. Oxford Street was never like that in my day. Now I doubt whether the former palaces of the Burghers are as disreputable as they are made out to be. If indeed these mansions deserve their present fame, then Manchester must be the scene of orgies such as the world has not known since the reign of Heliogabalus.

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Leslie A. Fiedler

From Clarissa to Temple Drake

Women and Love in the Classic American Novel

THE modern novel and the United States come into existence at the same moment, the two great inventions of the bourgeois, Protestant mind. Along with psychology and the idea of Revolution, the "new novel" represents that psychic breakthrough which makes the mid-18th century so critical a point in the history of the West. It took Diderot, himself a novelist and pornographer as well as an Encyclopædist, to say for the first time just what the novel and the age were after. "*It is he,*" Diderot wrote of Samuel Richardson, whose *Clarissa* is the first great book of the bourgeois world, "*who carries the torch to the back of the cave; it is he who teaches us to discern the subtle and dishonourable motives which hide and disguise themselves beneath other motives, which, being honourable, thrust forward to show themselves first. He breathes upon the sublime phantom who stands at the entrance to the cave, and the hideous Moor whom he conceals is revealed.*" If we begin by thinking of the novelist as being such a lighter-up of the dark places of the psyche, the revealer of the underside of human motivation, we will understand in what sense prose fiction gives us a view into national character, and why an inquiry into the peculiar nature of American fiction, the distinction of our novels from those of Europe, becomes finally an inquiry into our culture and our selves.

Any look at our literature, however cursory, reveals two extraordinary facts. The first is the excessive rôle played in the development of the novel in the United States by the tale of terror, what used to be called "Gothic" fiction. The second is purely negative, an emptiness where one looks for a centre: in the best known novels of our classic canon, there is missing the great love story, the account of a passionate relationship between a man and a woman that we have come to expect as the defining essence of the novel; and this absence reveals more about us and our art than any presence.

I do not mean, of course, that "love" in this limited sense is necessary to all art. Much of Greek epic and tragedy ignores it; and in the heroic literature of the Middle Ages, in *Beowulf* or the *Chanson de Roland*, it exists peripherally where it is found at all. The 18th century even felt that there was not enough of such "romance" in Shakespeare; and when they re-wrote his plays, as they were in the habit of doing, they did their best to remedy this lack, marrying off Cordelia, for instance, to Edgar. (In a Restoration reworking of *The Tempest*, even Caliban is given a girl!) It is, however, precisely this taste of the Augustans which helped define the novel; and our continuing tradition, starting with the *Pamela* and *Clarissa* of Richardson, takes as its basic fable the love-conflict of a man and a woman, the one striving for uncommitted seduction and escape, the other for

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total commitment and the institutionalisation of passion in marriage.

In France, Germany, Italy, Russia, even in England, ethically so close to us in other ways, love in one guise or another remains the theme of the novel, as essential to the form as war to the Epic or revenge to Renaissance tragedy. A European writing in the 20th century can say with offhand assurance, "Society demands that women have husbands; the novel that they have lovers." But the American novel demands neither husbands nor lovers—it does not even demand women! Even Dostoevsky provides rôles to set Marilyn Monroe dreaming, but what about the greatest writers of her own country? "Without adultery there is no novel," the same European critic can write. But where is the American *Madame Bovary*, *Anna Karenina*, *Wuthering Heights*, or *Vanity Fair*? The best we can offer in this category (I speak of our classic novel, though the remoter effects of this odd lack still shape our fiction to this day) is *The Scarlet Letter*, where all passion exists in the pre-history of the novel, and the difficult-to-imagine physical consummation took place before the book begins. Our standard book of adultery is a tale in which the word itself is never mentioned and the act occurs discreetly offstage; and the child who is its only visible evidence is so elfin and ethereal, so obviously the symbolic result of a symbolic union, that we do not believe at all in her having been engendered by the ordinary processes. Indeed, the fall of Hester and Dimmesdale is so obscurely shadowed forth that the book which described it was placed on the children's shelf of the most genteel libraries in the years of our greatest moral timidity.

As for the rest, there are *Moby Dick* and *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, and the tales of Edgar Allan Poe—all works that can be read with relish by the sort of boy who boos the "mushy" love scenes at the Saturday movie show. Where do they come from, these books that seem driven into the forest, out to sea, down the river, even into the teeth of nightmares—anywhere to avoid having to recognise the fact that flesh and blood men and women come together in bed? One of the controlling factors which determine the theme and form of our great books is this strategy of evasion. It is in this sense that our most successful novels remain juvenile, appropriately consigned to the children's departments of our public libraries.

WHY, one is driven to ask? Is it simply, as Europeans are always ready to tell us, that there is no real sexuality in American life ("two skulls grating together," is an Italian observer's description of a kiss in the United States), and that, therefore, there cannot very well be any in American art?

Certainly, many of our own authors have subscribed to this belief. In a kind of mournful obbligato which persists throughout *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne deplores the sexual diminution of the American woman, the shrinking of her breasts and hips, the fading of her colour and vitality; while Twain in his private piece of pornography, *1601*, speaks of America as a strange land where "they doe it only once every seven yeares." The evidence of such men is suspect, however. Each married late in life a pale, hypochondriac spinster, an invalid, as if to prove to himself that he primarily sought from woman not satisfaction but salvation; and both may, therefore, be suspected of projecting personal inadequacies as national problems. In any event, such a Life-Art line of argument involves us in the chicken-egg dilemma. What we call "love" is, after all, a resultant of the conflicting pulls of a biological drive and a social convention of sentimentality. And it is literature, expressing and fixing that convention, which influences life in this regard quite as much as life influences it.

Certain conventions, as a matter of fact, were ready to hand, having been imported in the form of the novels which embodied them, before our national existence began. Eight-volume sets of *Clarissa* were carried along with ammunition and supplies by the British Fleet even during the Revolution; and *Clarissa* was the holy scriptures of the Senti-

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mental Love Code, that secret religion of the bourgeoisie which almost deified the Pure Young Girl as the saviour and treated marriage as equivalent to salvation, while making the seducer the very Devil and considering seduction the Ultimate Blasphemy. From *Clarissa* American writers and readers alike learned to view the relation of the sexes as an endless war between head and heart—in which the Male stood for Reason (i.e. free-thinking and libertinism), the Female for Feeling (i.e. natural piety and innocence). *Clarissa* is, we must remember, the prototype of the "American Girl," which is to say, the Protestant Virgin, the Pure Woman, who alone can save man from the enticements of his own cunning and lust; and who even in death, and after rape, triumphs over the rake who violates her.

Nowhere in the world were the conventions of Sentimental Love more sympathetically responded to than in America. Benjamin Franklin, who produced nothing which he could not sell, found it desirable to print *Pamela* as the first book off an American press; though he himself, to be sure, indulged in no nonsense about love, advising young men to "use venery for health . . . or offspring." Fathers who would allow their daughters no other reading matter than the Bible, permitted them to read *Clarissa*, those "virgin sheets" which "no prostitution stains." Her name and the name of Lovelace, her arch-opponent, became common nouns; and their encounter set the pattern of the American love story, especially in its more popular forms, for a hundred and fifty years. Unsatisfactory as it may seem to an age for which seduction has become a joke, the Sentimental Love Convention served over a long period as a source for literature of the first rank; not only the novels of Richardson himself, but also the First Part of *Faust*, celebrate its values and draw on its tearful resources. Why, then, its failure in America? Why its universal influence in our land, and its equally universal infertility?

Part of the answer is, I think, that the tradition found in American life a social organisation quite different from the one which had bred it; and finding no reality to which it could refer, became rapidly and necessarily debased. In its old-world beginnings, the Sentimental Love Code arose out of a conflict between the values of the old aristocracy and the new bourgeoisie. The religion of Sentimental Love is an answer to those Codes of Courtly Love which celebrated adultery as the necessary condition of passion and had become by the 17th century largely a cynical camouflage for the sexual exploitation of lower-class women. It is the answer of the middle-class to Don Juanism. Against Don Juan (called Lovelace in this bourgeois context) is set the Pure Maiden, always portrayed as middle-class in origin, while her would-be seducer is, of course, an aristocrat. Indeed, the Pure Maiden *is* the middle-class, the symbol of its boast that it will no longer be raped figuratively or literally by its former superiors. She represents the bourgeois conviction that its virtue and piety are more than a match for the vice and seductive reasoning of the nobility; and she becomes quite properly the centre of the novel, the form invented for the special delectation of the middle-class reader.

In America, however, which possessed no hereditary aristocracy and whose impoverished class distinctions never took hold of the popular imagination, the class-war meanings of the sentimental novel were soon lost (except where they were rather unconvincingly translated into conflicts between British Redcoats and good Revolutionary American girls, then between Confederate Officers and loyal Union lasses; or last of all, into a sexual contest between city slicker and country maiden, whose last degenerate persistence is in the archetypal joke of the travelling salesman and the farmer's daughter). In the popular fiction produced in America for and by females, the sentimental tradition is rapidly transformed; the line which begins with the all-time best-seller of Susannah Rowson, *Charlotte Temple*, passes into the hands of what Hawthorne called bitterly "a d——d mob of scribbling women" and is not yet exhausted. In the course of this development, the seduction fable no longer stands for the resistance

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and eventual victory of the bourgeoisie, but only for a war of the bourgeois sexes whose inevitable end is the degradation of the male.

In America, the only permanent class lines are drawn between men and women. The tearful extravaganzas in which men are portrayed as pure lust and women as pure sentiment enjoyed a spectacular success which had nothing to do with their (non-existent) literary merits. No wonder! They satisfied on the one hand the 19th century woman's desire symbolically at least to take revenge for her subjugation, and on the other the 19th century man's resolve to punish himself for being unable to resist plucking the dewy flower of maidenhood he was convinced he should only respectfully have sniffed.

In the end, male and female made a mutual pact, based on guilt and fear, to castrate father ("polishing off father," Mark Twain's wife and daughters called the process of making him acceptable to polite society), and the images of masculine humiliation proliferate endlessly. The first popular American image of the seducer, our own Lovelace, was Mrs. Rowson's Montraville, who seduced Charlotte Temple, and whom we meet for the last time in *Lucy Temple; or, Charlotte's Daughter*. There we see him "*sunk upon the shoulder of his wife, pale and almost lifeless,*" and learn that "*he sometimes laboured under slight fits of insanity,*" and that "*indeed it is only by powerful opiates that he obtains any, and by them alone the smallest exhilaration of spirits.*" "*All blighted,*" Mrs. Rowson explains, "*by once yielding to the impulse of guilty passions.*" Hawthorne himself, for all his protests, contributes to the gallery of maimed masculinity in his own seducer, the Arthur Dimmesdale of *The Scarlet Letter*, whose debility is insisted upon as a major theme: "*his form emaciated,*" "*his moral force abased into a more than childish weakness,*" "*on the verge of lunacy,*" etc., etc. The climax is reached in the scene at the scaffold: "*It was hardly a man with life in him that tottered on his path so nervelessly.... He still walked onward, if that movement could be so described, which rather resembled the wavering effort of an infant with his mother's arms in view....*"

In *The Blithedale Romance*, Hawthorne returns to the theme in his description of the subjugation of the too-male Hollingworth by the prim maiden Priscilla: "*As they approached me, I observed in Hollingworth's face a depressed and melancholy look, that seemed habitual; the powerfully-built man showed a self-distrustful weakness, and a child-like or childish tendency to press close, and closer still, to the side of the slender woman whose arm was within his.*" The ending is the same on all levels, in Hawthorne or in Mrs. Rowson, as art or entertainment: "sunk upon the shoulder" of a wife, who hovers over the broken man not only with what Hawthorne describes as "a protective and watchful quality," but also what he is acute enough to call "a veiled happiness" at being able to sustain at last what she has unmanned to begin with. She has made, out of the image of a threatening father, a dependent child—and has thus done her bit to perpetuate a nation of boys and a literature of boys' books.

Whatever this convention has in fact done to life in America, it has castrated our art. When even our best older writers turn to the subject of love, they reveal themselves not as the beneficiaries but rather the victims of the sentimental tradition. The Inviolable Maiden enters, and they begin to slobber rhapsodically like Melville dealing with Lucy in *Pierre* ("*Thus far she has floated as stilly through this life, as thistle-down floats over meadows.... Never shall I get down this vile inventory! How, if with paper and with pencil I went out into the starry night to inventorise the heavens? Who shall tell the stars as teaspoons? Who shall put down the charms of Lucy Tartan on paper?*"), or become as dull and silly as Hawthorne portraying the ingenue in *The House of the Seven Gables*.

Occasionally, moved by a sense of what is sexless and de-sexing in the image of the Blonde Angel, American novelists have tried to create beside her a corresponding Dark

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Lady—Italian or Oriental or Jewish, or best of all, with just a touch of Negro blood like poor, blighted, buxom Cora in *The Last of the Mohicans*. ("*'Like thee and thine, venerable chief,' she continued . . . suffering her head to drop . . . her burning cheeks were concealed in the maze of dark glossy tresses that fell in disorder on her shoulder, 'the curse of my ancestors has fallen heavily on their child.'*") Such fantasies of warm sexuality, with the hint of miscegenation that betrays their inner uneasiness, must be punished like sins; for they represent their author's protest against an impotence he should welcome as a deliverance. And so the Dark Ladies are forbidden marriage and brought to death in terror, poisoned or stabbed or drowned—not merely killed but humiliated and scorned: Cooper's Cora by Heyward, Hawthorne's Zenobia by Hollingworth. Their downfall is an analogue of the emasculation of the male lover; for they represent his sexuality projected as a temptation rather than recognised as an impulse. Once the Dark Woman and the Repentant Seducer were a single figure, were Don Juan; but in the post-Puritan mind they are torn apart. The fatal charm of the Seducer, which is the fatal charm of love itself, is personified as the Other Woman—and in the place of Lovelace stands the trembling child-husband.

Hawthorne, who most magnificently and bitterly imagines the Dark Lady, becomes expert in her destruction, which he is the first to realise is best portrayed as suicide—not murder but self-destruction. His portrait of the drowned Zenobia is a masterpiece of fear and guilt: dragged up at midnight from the dark pond into which she has cast herself, with a final wound in her breast from the pole which fishes her out, she who inspired longing becomes an object of nausea. It is as if at the stroke of the magical hour the spell of her evil charm had been broken and the inner loathsome truth revealed. "*Six hours before, how beautiful! At midnight, what a horror!*" "*Of all modes of death, methinks it is the ugliest. Her wet garments swathed limbs of a terrible inflexibility . . . her knees, too, were bent and—thank God for it!—in the attitude of prayer. . . . But her arms! They were bent before her, as if she struggled against Providence in never-ending hostility. Her hands! They were clenched in immitigable defiance.*" Beatrice Rapaccini—Hester herself—Zenobia and Miriam—the diabolical female who would save man by experience rather than innocence, haunts the mind of Hawthorne and is hunted down to immolation or death. "The woman gave me and I did eat. . . ." At least for him she remains to the end a subtle and complex creature, the sign of a mystery; but in popular art she is rapidly vulgarised, until in the cowboy movie she makes her last stand as the black-haired dance-hall girl (Mexican, if it can be managed), the soft-hearted whore, who initiates the hero and, taking into her body the villain's bullet intended for him, dies to leave him safely in the arms of the fair-haired school-teacher, the last daughter of Pamela.

Over the Dark Woman as over the seducer, the Pale Protestant Virgin wins her inevitable, crippling victory and becomes the long-suffering wife. Finding no way to defeat her (knowing no way to *want* to defeat her) the American author could only at first avoid her: escape to the dream or the nightmare—to the world of "nature" from the world of "civilisation" over which she presided; or to the realm of night from the daylight which she had pre-empted. In each of his substitute universes, he would find a surrogate bride and an innocent "marriage." In the world of nature, there was waiting for him the Good Companion: a dark-skinned male partner, Chingachgook or Nigger Jim or Queequeg, with whom, beside the campfire or on the lonely deck, he could plight a sexless and sacred troth. "*He pressed his forehead against mine, clasped me around the waist, and said that henceforth we were married,*" Melville writes of Queequeg and Ishmael in *Moby Dick*; then adds, "*meaning, in his country's phrase, that we were bosom friends. . . .*" The explanation is not really cued by a fear of being misunderstood; for the idea of a physical but innocent male com-

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radeship in American books is too "child-like" and naïve to feel the need for insisting it is not really homosexual after all.

In the realm of Night, the surrogate is the sister, the mirror image of the self, and the imagined consummation is the mutual death-clasp unbroken even by the orgasm of terror. "*Then with a low moaning cry*," Poe writes of Madeline of Usher, "*fell heavily inward upon the person of her brother, and in her violent and now final death-agonies, bore him to the floor a corpse....*" From Hawthorne's *Alice Doane's Appeal* through the tales of Poe to Faulkner's *Absalom! Absalom!* the threat of incest and its sublimation in death has presided over American fiction not only among the highbrow writers but among the authors of best-sellers, too. It is the major theme of the very first American novel, *The Power of Sympathy* by William Hill Brown; and even Mrs. Rowson could not stay away from it, but took it up in *Lucy Temple* as a final *frisson* for the sequel to her most popular work. Melville, fighting to regain his audience after the financial fiasco of *Moby Dick*, could think (and with more justice than one is inclined to imagine) of no more promising subject for the intended best-seller that became *Pierre* than brother-sister incest with seduction in the background.

More recently, the American novelist has learned to confront face to face the images that haunt his cavern, to recognise his own hunger for impotence and his fear of women; and though the older themes of "pure" homosexuality and the union of brother and sister in death have not been completely abandoned, he has added to his repertory the direct attack on the female, a literature of blasphemy against the goddesses of Sentimental Love. Yet the American novelist has not really delivered himself by exposing the sacred virtue of the Maiden as a hoax or the humility of the wife as a secret weapon; his rage against women is only the obverse of his sentimental obeisance before them, a turning from one excess to another rather than a winning through to new insight. The revengeful bitches of Hemingway, for instance, using their unfaithfulness to unman their husbands, seem as little real women as the forgiving saints of Mrs. Rowson, using their faithfulness for the same end: they are projections of terror still.

Yet the moment at which the Blonde—rather than brunette anti-type—becomes the destroying vampire in our art marks a turning point in our sentimental history. As late as Theda Bara, the old myth still holds, however stereotyped and debased; but with Jean Harlow we enter another phase. From her to Marilyn Monroe, we have lived through an uninterrupted series of sexually potent "dyed blondes"—the very term, and the dull jokes about peroxide bottles which surround it, betray our growing sense that there is no genuine Fair Lady, only brunettes wearing false colours.

IT WAS not the writers, however, who woke from the sentimental dream, but the American woman herself, who in her struggle for the right to shear her hair and shorten her skirts and cast a ballot woke them against their wills—deliberately shattering the dream of innocence she could no longer abide. To this rejection our male writers have responded with all the anguish of one suddenly realising that the Pure Maiden for whose sake he has castrated himself now reproaches him for his impotency and searches for satisfaction elsewhere. The deliberate profanations of the Secular Virgin which characterise recent fiction are products of this anguish. The Charlotte Temple of Mrs. Rowson, who had reached Henry James via the Hilda of Hawthorne's *Marble Faun*, was subtilised finally into Daisy Miller, the European dream of the American Girl. But Daisy in the hands of Henry James could not marry, only die; and reborn, she became the fallen Daisy of Scott Fitzgerald's *Gatsby*, the heiress of all the ages turned rich bitch. Beyond this Daisy, there is only Faulkner's Temple Drake, the final avatar of the Female Saviour in America, a drunk and nymphomaniac upon whom Popeye tries in vain to exact the male's revenge for his long ignominy, to repeat the violation with which our literature begins.

How much has changed between Temples!

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The names recur with almost uncanny appropriateness, but almost nothing else remains: from Charlotte Temple we regress to Temple Drake. The first Temple (however vulgarised from the image of Clarissa Harlowe) possessed, even in her fall to the seducer, the holiness her name implies. A fictional saint of love, her name was inscribed upon an actual tombstone in New York's Trinity Churchyard by someone to whom she was eminently real; and for a hundred years or more, young girls in secret would lay flowers upon her imagined grave. But Temple Drake is desecrated even before the bloody, meaningless rape; a desecrated temple in a book called *Sanctuary*, whose point is that there is in our world no such thing. And Montraville (already a caricature of Lovelace) must endure becoming Popeye: that impotent, back-alley *voyeur* whose name defines him.

Already in the Miles Coverdale of Hawthorne's *Marble Faun*, the American writer had contrived an image of himself as a peeping Tom, watching from behind his curtains the consummation in which he could not intervene. For our age, however, the genteel image of the lonely bachelor unable to speak his passion no longer seems a desperate enough projection of the failure of love. Jack Barnes studying in the mirror his ridiculous wound helps to make of Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* a mirror in which we can all see how the bullet has maimed us; but he is still too sentimentalised a version of impotence, too gallant and cynical a lover for all his castration, to tell the truth. It is only Popeye, achieving with the corncob the revenge on women for which he has no other weapon left, who renders in all its violence and absurdity the American plight I have been trying to define.

When I Have Fears

WHEN I have fears that *I may be*
caught in the act of art or vivid love
I calculate what makes my present life
half-death and vacancy.

This drifting-upward, that declining form—
could I but clasp them and accept
inevitable decay; allow
external loss conceals ambiguous charm:

a charm quite hidden from the young
who wreak their ways dishonestly and drink
not the black leavings but the wine.
Magic, of course, is neither quick nor long

nor lucid, evil, innocent—
(though more within the shadow than the light)—
but firm and stonily made strong
by ritual and chant.

Like effigy toward effigy,
the killer and the archetype of love
approach each other and converge,
propelled by fears that *they may be*.

Howard Griffin

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Colin MacInnes

"See you at Mabel's"

IT'S five past three in the afternoon, the London pubs have closed, you're dying for a drink. What happens?

You head for "the purlieus in the vicinity of Shaftesbury Avenue," as a judge called them recently, and visit Mabel's place, or one of the other drinking clubs. These resemble in no respect the port-and-leather palaces in Pall Mall, or the honest social and sporting clubs about the country. The drinking clubs —in the words of Mr. Arthur Seldon,* "essentially public houses outside the licensing laws"—are remarkable for their numbers and variety of atmosphere, and for the very fact that they exist at all. These clubs conform, more or less, to the letter of the laws that govern them; yet it is clear that Mabel's was not the kind of club imagined by the legislator, and that she and her resourceful colleagues conduct their clubs in ways quite different from those that were intended. In a nutshell, the paradox is this: though hundreds of these places are technically "members' clubs," they belong in fact more absolutely to individual owners than any public house does to its licensee.

Here are the theory and practice of the matter. To open a "members' club," you gather together twenty-five ratepayers, as reputable as may be (really, they should approach you, not you them), and you apply to the chief inspector of police of your area for permission to open up. The inspector—or, in fact, his minions—look into you and the twenty-five and, if all is well, in three months' time or so a permit, costing five shillings, is granted by the Magistrates' Court. Meanwhile, you have rented premises which the sanitary inspector (and the police once more) must examine and approve. Then you stock up with booze, hang out a neon sign, and a new club has joined the 500-odd that are said to exist in the district round W.1.

Somewhere or other, you should display (though you will probably put it away among the empties) the rules and regulations of the club. These, except for minor details, are standard, and can be bought in printed form at a stationer's. Chief among their clauses are:

* In an article called "Club against Pub" in the *Manchester Guardian* of 30th June, 1956, an excellent short guide to the legal intricacies.

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"*The Club's objects are the promotion of social, sporting, and recreative intercourse*" (this last phrase, if anyone reads it, is always good for a laugh).

There will be a General Committee, appointed by a General Meeting, which will select a Wine Committee of three persons.

"*The Club is a mutual co-operative concern carried on by the members collectively, not for trading or profit.*" The prices of drinks will therefore be fixed in such a way as to "*prevent any loss or surplus accruing to the Club.*"

In practice, things, to say the least, are otherwise. Who, for instance, has ever attended a General Meeting of a drinking club? Who, when buying his gin and tonic, has ever enquired if the price is such as will "prevent any loss or surplus accruing to the club"? Though all the apparatus of committees and so forth may exist, these clubs are owned, conducted, bought, and sold by individuals. If they were not, few would exist at all.

NO CLUB is typical, but this is the basic set-up. Mabel's place will be located either on a first floor or in a basement (ground floors are rare). Behind the bar will be Mabel herself, her friend, male or female (or *vice versa*, if Mabel is a man), and a barman or, less usually, a bar-woman (one cannot, in this context, say a "barmaid"). In addition, there may be a "host" (male—he probably gets free drinks, but no wages) who radiates bonhomie and stimulates the urge to spend, one or more "hostesses" who do the same, a pianist (sometimes a small band), a cloakroom attendant and a doorman (often the same person, and potentially the chucker-out). In size, most clubs are small—generally one fair-sized room with "offices" adjacent.

Even if there is no doorman, directly you go into Mabel's place one of these pairs of eyes will spot you (probably Mabel's own, which are at the sides and back of her head as well as the front). If you're an interloper, not a member, you'll be met with an icy "Can I help you?" and hustled out. If a member, greetings will be general, and it is etiquette to bestow on Mabel's cheek a hearty, sexless kiss. Should a friend be with you, not a member, you'll be asked at once to "sign your guest in" (both of you should sign the form)—an important ritual, though ninety-nine signatures in each hundred are totally illegible. Non-members may not drink till this is done, nor may they buy drinks: most clubs are strict about this (though there is nothing to prevent your pal handing you the money). If you want your friend to become a member, he fills in an application which must be "posted in a conspicuous position in the Club Room for the space of forty-eight hours." Subscriptions range from 10s. 6d. up to two guineas, but are often waived in the case of persons who are thought likely to become "good spenders"—though, according to the regulations, this shouldn't be, unless an "honorary membership" (whatever that may mean) is granted. In many clubs, it is by no means automatic that the application of a newcomer—even if vouched for by a member—will be accepted until the proprietor has looked the candidate over on several visits. Sometimes a member deemed, for various reasons, undesirable, may get "barred"; and since different people get "barred" at different clubs, it can be a delicate matter, if you're taking a party out, to find a place where everyone is welcome.

In the more squalid joints, the prices of drinks are much the same as those of public houses; but in a place like Mabel's, beers will be 2s., and spirits 3s. 6d. the nip. Credit, according to the regulations, "is illegal," but is often given, since the illusion of getting drinks for free encourages further spending. By her native wit, discreet questioning, and gossip, Mabel assesses the sum to which she thinks she can safely let you go before gentle, then sharper, hints are dropped that a settlement would oblige. In spite of this, she is certainly often left with bad, and quite unrecoverable, debts. The belief is strong, among club *habitués*, that the "bill," when finally presented, is always inflated beyond the sum actually drunk; but if this is so, one can only say that as Mabel in fact is lending

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you money without security, she's entitled to interest on it.

In a very few clubs, you can drink "after hours"—that is, after 11 p.m., when all clubs should close. But most are seriously-conducted places, if only because they don't want trouble. Not being, like the pub, a "public" house, the police, in theory, cannot go into a club without a warrant; but police officers have a way of going where they want to, and from time to time they pay the clubs a call. These officers grow less and less like their caricatures, and are increasingly difficult to spot; though two indications of what they are—even if he is wearing a crew-cut and drain-pipe slacks, and she a clinging garment and a beaver stole—are that they will stare at you with a persistence found nowhere in Europe north of Spain, and that if you talk to them, however boring you may be, they will listen with an endless fund of patience. The legend is that, on the whole, "the Law" is not hostile to the clubs, if only because they provide splendid founts of information, and are the places where the wanted person of each category is most likely to be found.

THE READER, if not a patron of these places, will now be asking why hundreds of people go there every day. "I can understand," he says, "your wanting to drink between three and half-past-five. But why, when the pubs open up again, do you prefer standing tight-packed in a stuffy room paying 7s. for a double Scotch you can get outside for half the price?"

One answer is that a lot of drinkers dislike public houses very much. Speaking for myself, I am fond of clubs and "caffs," but loathe espressos and, with few exceptions, pubs. I think the "friendly English inn" is a much over-rated thing. The word "pub" conjures up for me no vision of a cheery mine host and rollicking regulars. I see instead grim-faced citizens with their hats on, swilling slowly gassy pints, flanked by tight-skinned women sipping gin with a dreadful air of decorum, the pair staring silently and censoriously at nothing. Even worse are the ghastly saloon bar wits, belching with hard unfriendly laughter, or public bar athletes getting in everyone's way with that inane game called darts. The service is slow and slovenly (will they *never* wipe the counter, as they do in every civilised country, or, if they can't, manage at least not to put the packet of fags you've bought in a puddle of ale?). The food (unless the pub is Jewish) is a disgrace (withered pork pies and leaden sausages are a luxury; the best you can usually hope for are potato crisps, peanuts, aspirins, and breath-pills), and you can't get a coffee, so that your wretched non-drinking companion has to drench himself in fruit and vegetable juices. To add to these delights, they've now installed the telly; and if you ask for a drink, they gaze at you as if you'd screamed in church. They make you as drunk as they can, as soon as they can, and turn nasty when they succeed. In short, these places are like branches of a bank that happens to sell liquor instead of overdrafts: hideous, respect-

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able, and unwelcoming, with inconvenient opening hours.

A drinking club, by contrast, is a club: the clients are all acquaintances, or soon get to be so, and if Mabel knows her business, behave themselves nicely, even when high. Mabel and her like, although they're out to get your money, are hosts in a way "mine host" is not, and doesn't seem to want to be. (Perhaps the fact that more and more licensees are merely managers of the brewers who own the pub has a lot to do with it.) Club owners are various in temperament, but it's in the nature of their job that they must be patient, obliging, firm, shrewd, and tactful—all attractive qualities. As for the profit they make, if you work out, even roughly, what their wages bill must be, add rent in an expensive quarter, and other likely charges, it's clear it can't be terrific. But the charm of their calling is the life: the constant exercise of social flair. In the words of one of them (now retired), "It's a perpetual party where your friends pay for the liquor." And it's a tribute to their popularity that the club is always known not by its real name, but by theirs: the "Tar Lake" thus becomes "Headley's," the "Military Pickle" is known as "Cuthbert's," and "The Noon-day Hour" is simply "Mabel's place."

THE membership, though in some clubs it is mixed and varied (they are the nicest), is often composed of those who have common interests: professional, racial, or sexual. Yet even within these categories, it's striking how faithful the members are to a particular club. In Brecht Street, Soho, for instance, there are three coloured clubs, but in one you will find sleek G.I.s, in another rumbustious Africans, and voluble West Indians in the third—yet with little interchange of custom between the three. In clubs whose clientèles have no such apparent bond of minority sympathy, the membership of each seems all the more watertight: you can drink a dozen times with Adam in one place, as many with Eve in another round the corner (or even in the same building), but never see Eve in Adam's club, or him in hers. Because of this, and because the decoration of each club is so individual and often peculiar, to visit several in a single evening is like seeing, in sequence, the scenes from entirely different plays.

Let's make a tour. At the "Tar Lake," Headley, the Trinidadian proprietor, will greet you with melancholy charm. In his heyday, twenty years ago, Headley was an adagio dancer much sought after for afternoon parties in Mayfair. Now he is sad, wise, and peaceful, though capable of shrill violence if offended. Immensely tolerant of amiable eccentricity (erotic dancing, uninvited musical turns, or impoverished pals who buy nothing all night and wheedle drinks from more prosperous customers by a lavish expenditure of winning smiles), he is strict about true

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breaches of nice conduct (shouting, swearing, even wearing a hat), and entirely fearless in correcting them. In the kitchen, behind his bar, is a sombre African who cooks meals till four in the morning with a great air of disdain: the pair seem on the worst possible terms, but their destinies are linked by some mystery—probably financial—indissolubly together. The membership is kaleidoscopic: Siamese students in splendid sweaters, who shake everybody's hand, and speak not a word of English; young French boys and girls singing melancholy songs, in dim corners, to a guitar; vivid West Indians who jive white girls slowly round with disdainful masculine languor; women getting ready for duty on the streets ("No, I won't have another now, dear—I'm going 'out' "); odd couples of all sexes, whose ambiguous glances recall the limerick line, "Who does which, and with what, and to whom?" . . . What lures these disparate spirits into "Headley's place"—whose decorations are drab in the extreme (crude murals, plastic palms, and furniture of the kitchen variety)? Undoubtedly, the atmosphere of freedom and equality that Headley's magic presence somehow engenders: which puts everyone on their best behaviour, and makes them eager to snatch small joys from the jealous evening, and spread whatever affability they can.

The "Military Pickle" is quite otherwise: most resplendent. The stair is carpeted, the cloakroom attendant calls you "Sir," albeit with a leer, and the decorations are like those of the embassy of a nation about to go into voluntary liquidation: "old master" paintings on flock wallpaper, Knole chairs, and a flower-decked grand-piano. Cuthbert, its owner . . . but *is* he the owner, or is it that Indian restaurateur who slides in sideways, like a piece of purposeful driftwood, never buys anything, bullies Cuthbert in a soft, high-pitched voice, and takes his leave finally with an undisguised sneer at everyone? Cuthbert, one gathers, was a military man, complete with gin-drenched moustaches and an egg-bald crown; but in what regiment he served is never specified. He attributes to favoured members ranks of his own selection ("Good evening, Colonel," to some youth of 23), and says things like, "Parade dismissed, gentlemen," at closing time. He has a huge and special glass ("my beaker") in which he pours all drinks that clients offer, and, when cashing a cheque, produces a wad of notes as thick as *The Times* folded octavo, saying, "I shouldn't have all this about me—the town's full of footpads, and besides, I'm a bankrupt." Who *are* his members—these dozens of men and women expensively dressed, with currency falling out of their ears and infinite leisure, who only rarely admit to an occupation? When Cuthbert finds out what your own "line of country" is, he says you must meet old So-and-so (naming someone at the apex of your profession)—"a former messmate of mine"; and occasionally, he does effect the introduction, though six months or more after he first mentioned it. His eyes are pale blue, almost as pale as the whites, his lips pink and rapacious, you mistrust him on sight . . . yet, though you feel certain he's defrauding you, you never find out how. He has a flat above the club ("my orderly room") and invites chosen members up there after hours for "a little kit inspection among ourselves." He is unalterably affable, and in moments of confidence tells you, "I'm a villain, yes, but such a nice one, as they go."

And what of Mabel's place? Mabel's a character often met with in films and fiction, but oh! so rarely in reality: the platinum-tough girl with a heart of gold. Sharp, hard, ruthless, and aggressive, she's generous, forgiving, considerate, and rather shy. Quite ignorant of the inner operations of the professional worlds of all her members, she can nevertheless assess, with uncanny accuracy, their intrinsic talents and current reputations. In appearance she's a *belle laide*, bulky and perpetually radiant. Her conversation's witty and salacious, her capacity for absorbing spirits, without ill effect, apparently limitless. She's always glad to see you ("Sweetie! Come and kiss mother! You're a cup of tea!"), and just as glad, when the time comes to tot the takings, to see you go. Her barman, Henri, who's French (though of convenient British

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nationality), must be the only man in the world who's never been seen to be rude; and when one reflects on how dreadfully silly and irritating bar-flies are, this grace of nature seems to raise Henri, in spite of his trade, to the heights of a sort of saintliness. But the greatest charmer of Mabel's place is the pianist, called Angelo, from Grenada. He breaks off his current tune to play each new arrival in with a theme-song he's chosen for them—either flattering, like "You go to my head," or (if he thinks they can take it), one loaded with innuendo, as when he greets some notorious couple by "Mother Nature and Father Time." Angelo sees everything, and can produce at will an effortless, all-embracing smile which, if it doesn't come from the heart, always seems to do so.

Of course, the spell of the drinking club is partly morbid. To sit in Mabel's place, with the curtains drawn at 4 p.m. on a sunny afternoon, sipping expensive poison and gossiping one's life away, has the futile fascination of forbidden fruit: the heady intoxication of a bogus Baudelairian romantic evil. As the gins slip down your throat, and the dim electrics shine on the potted plants and on Mabel's lurid colour scheme of emerald green and gold, you feel like the fish in the tank above the cash-register—swimming aimlessly among artificial water-weeds, mindless in warm water. The pub, drear though it may be, is certainly more bracing—it offers none of the spurious comforts of this infantile hankering for the womb. . . . And is it, you wonder, as night falls all too abruptly, because of war memories that club addicts are so fond of cellars? Is it that life underground is appropriate to the atom age?

In England, the war between Cavaliers and Roundheads is eternal. All English institutions reflect the compromise between the saints and sinners, between the Salvation Army and the Music Hall views of life. Our lunatic licensing laws are one of the crazy cease-fire lines drawn up between the contending parties, and the drinking clubs, a typical British absurdity, a truce agreement in the struggle. Mr. Seldon estimates that clubs—"legitimate" social clubs as well as those purely for drinking — now account for one-eighth of the national drink bill, and, in Wales and the Midlands, a figure as high as a quarter or even a third. Clearly, the clubs, if ever challenged in strength, are vulnerable, and their status fragile; but it's probably because of the tacit agreement between the puritans and merrie Englanders not to disturb the balance of blackmail, that no one has yet gone gunning for them on a major scale.

(*Drawings by Alexander Weatherson*)

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THE "HARD-HEADED" FRENCHMAN

On se défend, touiours

WHEN a Frenchman answers the telephone, he says: "*Je vous écoute.*" In this way he takes up a position of defence against the unknown interlocutor at the other end of the line. To the greeting on the street, *Comment va?*, one is likely to receive the ironic reply, *On se défend.* In this slightly mocking fashion, with their special gift for self-conscious clarity, the French take note of a profound trait of their national character.

Defensive remarks greeted me when I arrived in September 1954 to start interviewing Frenchmen of the "élite classes," as part of a larger sociological study. What could one learn from such interviews? Besides, how could it be done? There was universal doubt about the value and the feasibility of the enterprise. The French, I was told, would never talk to a stranger with no other claim to their confidence than that of being an interviewer. Now, two years later, we have in fact managed to complete over fifteen hundred long interviews with Frenchmen of very high standing. To these questions have responded, in round figures, five hundred top businessmen, three hundred political leaders (including all but two of the post-war prime ministers and foreign ministers), a hundred high civil servants representing *les grand corps de l'État*, a hundred senior military men, a hundred clerical and lay spokesmen of the church, and a hundred officials of labour, farmers', and other pressure groups.

The trick was to get them started; but, once started, how they talked! The average length of the fifteen hundred interviews was over two hours, and a substantial number of them ran toward eight hours. (The same interview schedule, in England, averaged a bit over one hour and was fully answered.) Rather often the interviewer was requested to return, after a single session lasting two or three hours, by respondents eager to have their full say in an interview that took rather the form of an interior dialogue uttered aloud. The essential is that, once engaged, the Frenchman talked volubly. But, to engage him, one had to scale the defensive wall—as the French put it, *franchir le mur.*

"*Les Formules de Politesse*"

OUR first approaches to interviewing were modest, tentative, apologetic. Trial-and-error, hit-and-miss (what the French love to call "*l'empirisme anglo-saxon*") finally produced a workable formula. To each prospective respondent, the interviewer explained that his Institute had undertaken a study of attitudes among the élite. As Frenchmen do not respond readily to questionnaires, he continued, we were seeking the counsel of specially qualified persons: "Would you be so kind as to review with us the questionnaire we propose to use and give us the benefit of your criticisms? In responding yourself, you could explain which questions a Frenchman would be likely to resist and why; which questions would draw ambiguous or evasive responses that could not be properly interpreted; and which questions could be altered in such a way as to require reflective rather than merely stereotyped answers."

By casting the interviewee in the rôle of expert consultant, we gave him the opportunity to indulge in a favourite indoor sport—generalising about Frenchmen. This exercise suggested procedures that were, in fact, used in subsequent interviewing. More important, it provided us with a comprehensive set of French images of the French. How Frenchmen see each other—this became the starting-point of our inquiry on how they see the world around them.

Their comments clarified, for example, the psycho-cultural rôle of French conventions of courtesy. The highly elaborated set of *formules de politesse* is an elegant way of maintaining proper distance between individuals. By comparison with the American desire for quick intimacy, for promptly reaching a first-name basis, there is a general appreciation in France of the reserved person. This is the mark of a person *bien élevé*, raised with a proper sense of right conduct. A rule that governs personal

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relations in France is: "*Il faut garder ses distances.*" It is generally believed that a person is likely to suffer if, *par manque de réserve*, he exposes himself to the will and way of others. French distance-maintaining mechanisms make it easier to ritualise all sorts of relationships that elsewhere are met by improvisations.

There *is* an established code of behaviour in most matters of daily routine. French gastronomy is a case. *La cuisine française* is widely recognised as a high order of artistic achievement, but its ritual characteristics are less widely noted. Frenchmen tend to be rigid in all matters associated with feeding. There is practically no variation in *les heures de repas* of any region. There is little deviation as to which type of wine goes with which food, and few venture from established rules in order to "try something different." Even the conception of a well-composed meal (*repas bien composé*) is a distinctly Gallic idea with certain fixed features. A young French writer, returning from a summer vacation in the U.S.A., where he was outraged by many native practices, gives priority to the utter *bouleversement* he suffered from American habits of non-scheduled snacks—"*les repas pris à n'importe quelle heure et n'importe comment. . . .*" The case is more dramatic with respect to Chinese cuisine, which many non-French gastronomes regard as the only serious rival to the French, if not its superior. But the notion of eating according to another logic than the linear progression from the spicy (*pour ouvrir l'appétit*) to fish, flesh, salad, cheese, fruit, sweet, coffee, seems to Frenchmen curious and *invraisemblable*. The Chinese logic, if anything more complex and refined, of arranging taste sensations in cyclical fashion appears to them as being merely comic: "*Figurez-vous, ils vous servent un entremet, tout d'un coup, après quelques poissons variés et puis ils terminent le repas avec la soupe! C'est drôle, hein?*"

"*Le Refus de s'engager*"

THE French desire for an environment arranged in a stable fashion, with familiar routines defined by recognisable limits, manifests itself also on questions of public consequence. Typical expressions of distaste for innovation are "*Pas de surprise!*" and "*pas d'aventure!*" This systematic French distrust of whatever is new and strange underlies a variety of otherwise inexplicable phenomena.

Take the notorious case of French politics. During the past several years, the government has suffered from a sustained incapacity to act decisively. Characteristically, the French themselves quickly found *le mot juste* to describe this situation: *l'immobilisme*. Political immobility became pervasive when France was confronted by a new and strange set of demands. The major test was the European Defence Community, which asked nothing less than that Frenchmen henceforth conceive their political identity in terms of being Europeans. There were better reasons for hesitation than many foreigners recognise. But to prolong the issue over four years before they finally rejected an idea they had themselves created was peculiarly characteristic of French politics. Perhaps its sublime expression was the declaration of M. Antoine Pinay, former prime minister and minister of foreign affairs: "*Je suis autant que personne partisan du mouvement, mais j'entends qu'il ne débouche pas sur l'aventure.*"

France has become a land in which "surprise" and "adventure" are pejorative words. Every approach from "the outside" must be regarded with suspicion by a person in his right mind. The prudent posture, when confronted by any new and strange proposition, is defence: "*On veut m'avoir.*" The safest way to defend one's self, naturally, is a refusal to participate at all ("*Je ne marche pas*"), thereby avoiding the risk of *l'aventure*.

Underlying this view of political action is a more general ontological perspective that has been worked into the French sensibility. Frenchmen commonly perceive the environment as more detached and remote from themselves than do, say, Anglo-Americans. The external world possesses for them rather definite characteristics, including a capacity for action which is independent of the will of particular human beings. Ordinary French conversation produces an array of phrases which expresses this idea. One speaks often, for example, of "*la force des choses*," a notion rarely heard in America, where it is regarded as defeatist rather than realist, and hardly more often in Britain. Another way of referring to the external world as possessing a reality independent of human effort is the phrase "*les choses sont ce qu'elles sont.*"

This perspective tends to disengage the individual from great public issues. Politics becomes a random series of events about which one can do little. The Anglo-American idea that policy is a sequence of decisions by which one seeks to alter events before they become the *données* of the next public crisis—this idea seems to very many Frenchmen pretentious and rather tiresome. The young express this sentiment by making *je m'en-foutisme* into an ideology; their elders are content with the celebrated Gallic shrug whereby passive indifference connotes superior intelligence. Either way, this attenuates political life by a widespread *refus de s'engager*, which limits personal involvement with *la chose publique*.

A consequence of the *refus de s'engager* is the

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relative scarcity of voluntary organisations in France as compared with the massive American proliferation of channels whereby individuals engage themselves in public enterprise. The absence of active civic participation is evident in all social classes in France. There are very few "clubs" of the sort developed by the upper social groups in Britain. Among the middle class there are few parallels of Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions. Certainly such institutions as the Parent-Teachers' Association, the League of Women Voters, and the Association of University Women have no opposite numbers among a people whose women remain firmly rooted in their primordial sexual rôle. Among the working class only the labour union has made any headway, but even it hardly touches the French worker in his daily life—offering him neither educational opportunities, recreational facilities, consumers' co-operatives, nor social diversions. All classes of Britons are likely to be shocked by the absence of an effective Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The participant life languishes because the Frenchman is repelled by "groupism": he guards his inner privacy, the mastery of his individuality (*maîtrise de soi*), by a resolute *méfiance* toward others.

This is part of the fixed self-image of Frenchmen as *réalistes*, which finds varied expression in the phrases used to praise one's compatriots. The French are "hard-headed" (*réfractaires*). They do not "kid themselves" (*pas d'illusions*). Or, as one of our "consultants" phrased it. "*Les Français n'aiment pas se raconter des histoires.*" Realism is associated intimately with another self-ascribed trait: scepticism. A person who holds optimistic views on practically any subject is sure to lose his illusions (*prendre un coup dur*). In popular parlance the man who buys the Brooklyn Bridge is a "soft fruit" (*une poire*), who gets universal derision with little of the underlying sympathy Americans retain for the "sucker." For the Frenchman, *une vache à lait* ("softie") is strictly *un pauvre type*, and "*tant pis pour lui!*" ("too bad for him!"). After all, "*il faut savoir se défendre!*"

And so *la chose publique* yields pride of place to the austere demands of privatisation. By rejecting involvements in the public arena, *le soi* guards its privileged status as a *territoire sacré*. The flow of public discourse in France profoundly respects the sanctity of the ego. Even in technical psychology, the vocabulary used for describing the "self-system" and its manifold operations is underdeveloped.

"*In the Soup*"

Once these conventions of privacy have been breached, the interviewer must still deal with the special French conventions of cognition. The metaphysics which endows the external world with active attributes of its own also creates new problems of question-formulation for a foreigner accustomed to more empirical habits of thought. In our earliest interviews I was baffled by the recurrent request from respondents to state "precisely" various questions that seemed to me already precise. It required much conversation and reflection before I realised that, for the French, precision has a quite different and special meaning, a literally Cartesian meaning. What makes questions "precise" for Frenchmen is their capacity to frame the object of reference in a specific context ("*bien délimité, dans un cadre qui lui est propre*"). The object of reference, to be clear, must be perceived as *discrète*—with external boundaries sharply defined ("*circonscrire l'objet*" in the conventional vocabulary of French philosophy).

French insistence upon a discrete, disengaged object of reference underscores their revulsion against relationships without clearly perceived boundaries. The language abounds in pejorative expressions to express this horror of inadequate distantiation—"*dans le jus*," "*dans le sirop*," "*dans la soupe*." These images convey vividly the sense that fluidity (*des idées floues*) is the enemy of clarity. Other expressions of distaste for "fuzziness" are "*dans le cirage*," "*dans le coton*," and "*dans la vaseline*," where the soft and shapeless mass without defined margins provides the antonym of clarity and precision.

The limits which such a posture impose upon the interview is illustrated by a respondent who served us as "consultant." Director of an important national research organisation, with long experience in survey work, this man seemed perfect for our purpose. Indeed, he gave us many practical suggestions for question-wording, which helped us to avoid the vague and achieve the "precise." At five different questions scattered through our interview schedule, however, this man threw up his hands in utter contempt and despair. "You will never get any Frenchman to answer questions like these," he declared, without explaining why. These were the questions:

1. If you were *président du conseil* (prime minister), what would be the main lines of your policy?
2. If you had to live in another country, which one would you choose?
3. If you had your life to live over again, what sort of life would you want?
4. Who are the most enviable people in the world? Why?
5. What functions do you think you could fill in a Communist France?

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What these questions have in common is that they ask the interviewee to imagine himself in a situation other than his real one (i.e. they are "rôle-playing" questions). Such an idea is regarded as frivolous, not worth the attention of Frenchmen, who are, after all, "*des gens sérieux*." These questions were bound to provoke resistance among people who consider as their strongest traits realism, scepticism, and mistrust. And indeed they did, many interviewees regarding them as merely silly: "*De la blague!*" "*De la fantaisie pure!*"

An instructive study could be made of the diverse ways in which people of different nations respond to rôle-playing questions of this sort. Our British interviewees, for instance, responded to precisely these questions with only minor incident. In general, such questions are handled with greater facility by people habituated to ready ego-involvement with the new and strange, among people who, having a less rigid conception of themselves and their proper conduct in the world, show a more supple capacity for rearranging their self-image upon short notice. A clear difference in the capacity to empathise, to "play rôles," emerged from interviews conducted in the Middle East five years ago. There it was possible to identify the Traditionalists by their total incapacity to answer such questions as "What would you do if you were president of Syria?" By contrast, the Moderns seemed to experience no difficulty whatsoever when asked what they would do as editor of a newspaper, or as leader of their country, or if they had to live in another country.

There is a vast psychic difference between the illiterate and untutored traditionalism of the Middle Eastern peasant and the traditionalism which prevails among the contemporary élite of France. The Frenchman has acquired his traditionalism as an intellectual discipline and as part of an explicit psychic code. He is taught from childhood an articulate conception of *le bonheur* and a system of appropriate behaviour designed to maximise his satisfactions. Whereas the Arab peasant usually has no sense of possible alternatives to his traditional ways but simply "does what comes naturally," the Frenchman has a very sophisticated rationale for his conduct. He not only is quite aware of other ways of behaving but can (and usually does) tell you with the greatest clarity why his way is better than any other.

The personality associated with traditionalism takes a quite different turn, then, among the French. It explains why Frenchmen often accuse Americans, who think of themselves as the world's greatest individualists, of a "*manque d'individualisme*." For contemporary Americans, individualism implies non-conformity; expressing one's self means doing something just a little differently from the other fellow. For Frenchmen, individualism lives quite comfortably with a massive conformism. Their underlying principle is not to do some things a little differently, but rather not to do very many things at all. In the eyes of Frenchmen the American loses individuality by identifying himself too readily with other persons, by associating himself too intensely with public causes, and by joining too many organisations. The Frenchman guards his by maintaining *le soi* inviolate from the impingements of the public arena.

Politics and Police

WE GAINED *entrée*, in due course, to spokesmen of those social groups which constitute the political Centre and Right—businessmen, high civil servants, military leaders, even chiefs of the non-Communist trade unions. But we made little headway on the Left, a sector of the political continuum which is inadequately interpreted even in France and which reaches far beyond the Communist Party and fellow-travellers.

There exists in France a pervasive political sentiment called *gauchisme*. It is a sentiment because it entails no specific judgments on specific issues but expresses rather a diffuse general hostility to the powers-that-be and things-as-they-are. One approximation of a psychological definition of this sentiment was sketched by Albert Camus in *L'Homme révolté*, with reference to "the alienated intellectual." But the special importance of *gauchisme* in France is rather its sociological diffusion; types of Frenchmen have been affected by chronic oppositionism who, in other countries, are conservative or have no clearly defined political sentiment at all (e.g. army officers, civil servants, rich businessmen). A systematic sociology of the diffusion of *gauchisme* in France would do much to explain the French incapacity to act decisively on critical public issues during the last two decades.

It was among these *gauchisants* that our inquiry encountered the most widespread suspicion and resistance. We had decided, early in the game, that complete candour on the sponsorship of our study was essential. Our interviewers had been instructed to respond, when questioned, that the inquiry was jointly approved by French and American universities and that an American professor was a member of the scientific committee directing the study. The impact of this disclosure upon French *gauchisants* was strong enough to draw caustic remarks, to limit responsiveness, and, in some cases, to elicit a complete refusal. Some *gauchisants* who responded framed their remarks primarily to cause anguish to the American professor—a performance more

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frequent among those who took their *gauchisme* rather lightly. More committed Leftists not only refused to answer at all but in some cases went further. We were reported to the weekly journal *L'Express*, a leading mouthpiece of *gauchisme*, and for most of a week were haunted by a young reporter determined to denounce and expose our enterprise. Several hours of explaining carefully our interview schedule, our sampling procedure, and our modes of analysis failed to persuade her that it would be impossible for us to derive information useful to the police, French or American. It was perfectly clear to the reporter that there must be some hidden trick; once I was an American, the enterprise was necessarily a manœuvre of the Right and, *ipso facto*, despicable.

The extreme *gauchisant* went even further. In two regions we were denounced to the departmental *préfet*. Our interviewers there reported that, unless we could clear matters with the *préfet*, their usefulness would be at an end. In Paris we were subjected to two visits by agents of the DST (Défense de la Sécurité du Territoire, the French FBI). These persons scrutinised very carefully our intentions, procedures, and, most particularly, our affiliations in France. We were able to surmount those inquiries, as those of the regional *préfets*, only because our *comité de patronage* was composed of Frenchmen of impeccable standing.

Les Anglais: A Projective Test

WE LEARNED from these interviews, among other things, that how the French see other nations is now a function of how they see themselves. This sector of French sentiment has a special piquancy for British readers. With no other people do the French lead as complex and many-layered a psychic life as with their neighbours across the Channel. For penetration of the French fantasy world, *les Anglais* make a splendid projective test.

We can deal better with current French judgments of others when we recall André Siegfried's theorem that French culture had been "completed" by the 18th century. Indeed, one can usefully classify Frenchmen today in terms of their reckoning with the marvellous XVIII*ème*. There are those who are still for it (and sometimes in it); those who flaunt the XIX*ème's* reaction against it—the *bons esprits* who, in the phrase of Marcel Aymé, "still assign a high revolutionary coefficient to masturbation"; those who have reacted against XIX*ème's* reaction against it (the, so to speak, anti-anti-XVIII*èmes*). Here and there, one encounters someone who is in and of the XX*ème*. In some ways he seems hardly French any more!

These historic levels reverberated, like geologic layers in a tremor, when our interviewers asked Frenchmen how they felt about *les Anglais*. The ancient orders—military and clerical—emitted the sonorous peals of classic Anglophobia. No happenings *circa* A.D. 1956 dim, for the true Gallic Anglophobe, the vivacious souvenirs of Jeanne d'Arc and Waterloo. Compiègne still symbolises *perfide Albion* and not a few among our respondents still used, as a summary expression, some variant of the ancient formula "*l'argent anglais et les poitrines françaises*."

Events of 1956 not only fail to alter this undertow of Anglophobia, but are themselves transformed by its force. Thus, one 70-year-old retired cavalry colonel attributes current French ills mainly to British design—the interbellum failures of French policy; the defeat of 1940 "caused" by Dunkerque; the undermining of European Union with the defeat of EDC; even the tragedy at Dien Bien Phu (where British desire to safeguard Burma, he alleges, prevented U.S. use of the napalm bombs that would have gained the French victory). Doubtless he is today explaining why the sad outcome at Suez was due to the British. Enveloped in his antique reverie, this Old Soldier—who interlards trenchant critiques of others with such dicta as "*L'Etat doit être fondé sur la fidelité, la discipline et l'honneur!*" —still considers the principal obstacle to French glory to be *les Anglais*.

The classic Anglophobia, while still vibrant in the subsoil of French emotion, no longer is a prescriptive item in the national doctrine to which every Frenchman good and true must subscribe. The evidence of our interviews suggests, indeed, that Anglophobia of all types has declined in frequency and intensity. A perfectly upright Frenchman can now ignore the old chestnut of British perfidy and say: "*Les Anglais ont une grande loyauté dans l'exécution des contrats particuliers*." This revision of diehard dogma occurs mainly among people who have scaled down ancient French pretensions to an appropriate 1956 level of national aspiration. The relationship, in a word, is this: as appraisals of French power decline, so evaluations of British virtue rise.

Frenchmen are certainly not enamoured of their other principal allies—Americans and Germans. By contrast, *les Anglais* come to seem utterly admirable to many Frenchmen. Interesting variations on the Anglo-French relationship are registered when one collates French sentiments toward these others. It is rare, for example, that one should look with equal favour upon both Germans and Englishmen. (To look with equal disfavour upon both is less rare and forms the basic syndrome of French xenophobia, since these are still the two most salient national entities in the conventional French image of the

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world.) To the Germanophile—and he constitutes a species of Frenchman more numerous than is ordinarily supposed—the English usually figure as rivalrous and even diabolical, the principal component of disarray in a world that might otherwise be moulded into an orderly image of heart's desire. Such a person is much more likely than most of his compatriots to reveal a highly authoritarian set of preferences, including, if he is a relentless ideologue, the peculiarly French variety of matter-of-fact racism. He is likely, on current issues, to despise the Arabs (for whom his main adjectives are *sale*, *bête*, and *brutal*) and to blame French decline in North Africa upon British lack of imperial backbone in dealing with the colonial peoples.

Conversely, the Germanophobe—when he is not comprehensively xenophobic—is more likely to tend toward Anglophilia. For him *les Anglais* have, at least, the virtue of sharing his antipathy for the Germans (by contrast with the Americans, say, whose idolatry of productivity and efficiency supposedly blind them to more fundamental traits of human character). Depending upon the intensity of his Germanophobia, such a Frenchman's Anglophilia may carry him to extreme postures of filiopietism towards *les Anglais*. If there is intense anxiety in his feeling against Germany, and paranoid symptoms are not infrequent among such respondents, then his attitude toward the English is likely to exhibit the ambivalent adoration usually reserved for Big Brother.

These extremist syndromes of Germanophilia-cum-Anglophobia and Germanophobia-cum-Anglophilia are most clearly defined, of course, at the limits of the French spectrum of attitudes. While they surely resonate in the breasts of many ordinary Frenchmen, they are most revealing as expressions of political psychopathology in a nation whose historic self-imagery makes a poor fit to the current reality of forced choices presented, largely, by its partners.

"*Private Faces in Public Places*"

More subtle, in this context, are the discriminations which Frenchmen make between their major pair of partners—the English and the Americans. For a majority of Frenchmen the direction of sentiment is unilateral: they "like" both or "dislike" both with approximately equal vigour. But two substantial clusters of deviant cases appear among our respondents. One group dislikes the English and likes the Americans. These appear to be largely the same authoritarian types who like the Germans. They are also relatively more discontented with "*l'état actuel des choses*" in France. They find in common among the Germans and Americans the admirable traits of diligence, organisation, mechanism which satisfy a compulsive craving for orderliness—traits whose absence they deplore in France and whose failure to triumph in the world they attribute to the wily and unpredictable *Britanniques* (the epithet which usually replaces *les Anglais* in this context).

The other deviant group dislikes the Americans and likes the English. The underlying sentiment here appears to stem from a sense of shared greatness gone, a wistful affection for the lifeways evolved during the centuries when Frenchmen and Englishmen disputed between themselves for supremacy in the familiar arena of Europe (and the game overseas was merely an extension of the continental play). These older lifeways are felt to be a more suitable *règle de jeu* than the stark code, known as the Cold War, which defines right conduct for the powerful primitives (U.S./U.S.S.R.) now disputing mastery of the great globe itself. This preoccupation with the æsthetic surface of life starts from a net affirmation that "private faces in public places are nicer and wiser than public faces in private places." It expresses itself in the frequent selection, for special admiration, of personal deportment among the English as compared with the Americans or the Russians—since the two giants are usually perceived by such respondents as more alike than different. This preference for a private style of life is frequently transposed to interpret public behaviour, often with the sense that the English have somehow managed to adapt their style better to the demands of the world today.

In these tensions generated by the current need to reconstrue one's Self in terms of Others, the French pay a heavy psychic cost. It may be, as some have averred, only the *rentier's* horrified but belated discovery that his vested values have declined and he has been living off capital. But perceiving current French *malaise* as the outcome of a XVIII*ème* psyche that was "too finished," may aid diagnosis without advancing therapy. Granted that France no longer is what it was, its future will be shaped by the modes that prevail among Frenchmen of perceiving what it is.

For the classic self-image no longer works. Gone are the days when Frenchmen could see their civilisation as *un tout*, and rank all other peoples by the direction and degree of their deviation from this perfected model. Nowadays, Frenchmen are obliged to judge themselves afresh when they judge others.

Daniel Lerner

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A NATION OF READERS

— *and of writers, too*

THE famous woman writer looked around slowly at the appointments of the Western-style restaurant to which I had taken her for dinner, her slightly dazed eyes clearing gradually as if she were coming up from some great depth. "I've been so busy," she said, "that I scarcely have time for anything. I have to eat lunch literally with chopsticks in my left hand and pen in my right." But this is no exceptional story among Japanese writers these days. My friend is certainly busier than most, but there are probably more people in Japan classifiable as "writers," who make all or most of their living from writing—rather than from teaching, lecturing, journalism, or business—than in any other country in the world. The demand is so great that, in a quite literal sense, physical endurance becomes a significant factor in the writer's income. As far as sheer volume is concerned, there are several important writers who have already outstripped Balzac—and some of them have many years of creative work still lying ahead of them.

Nor does all this work go unrecognised and unrewarded. Writers rank high in the income tax lists (only because they cannot conceal their incomes like doctors and other professionals, some would complain). Like movie actors, they have a high ratio of automobile ownership, although the general pattern in Japan is to use the "company car," rather than own one's own. (An automobile in Japan costs about twice what it does in Europe.) My friend apologised to me for not having an automobile by explaining that she was too busy to take time out for going down, selecting a car, purchasing it, registering it, insuring it, finding a chauffeur, etc. . . .

If you ask people to explain this tremendous pressure, they will tell you that it is not because there are only a few writers, as might be the case in some South-East Asian countries. A recent estimate listed more than 1,000 professional free-lance writers, earning all or most of their income from writing. The almost standard explanation is: "We are a nation of readers. The people are so poor here that they cannot afford other amusements and so they go in for reading." Like the familiar argument about the birthrate being high in backward rural areas because there is no electric light and people have nothing else to do at night, this is only part of the truth. There are other peoples besides the Japanese who find money short and time hanging heavy on their hands, but they do not necessarily go in for reading. Furthermore, it should follow from this argument that the amount of reading goes down as Japan becomes more prosperous. And this, as anyone can plainly see, is not so. The amount of reading in Japan, as measured by annual sales of all kinds of published matter, goes up year by year. Japan has the most flourishing publishing industry in the world, if not in terms of business profits, then certainly in the production of words *per capita*. Japanese writers themselves in their more candid moments refer to it as a "verbal diarrhoea," and it takes many writers to keep the stream of words flowing through all the magazines, newspapers, books, radios, television sets, movies, and theatres.

One needs no more than a short ride on public transportation to realise this. Even General MacArthur, who rarely left his eagle's nest in the Dai-Ichi Insurance Building in downtown Tokyo to survey his realm, was augustly impressed by the sight of students reading books and magazines off the racks in the mile-long row of bookshops lining the Jimbocho district of Tokyo. "The future lies with these young people," he pontificated, puffing on his corncob pipe. The magazine has become as standard a part of the scene as the white-collar worker's brief-case, or the high-school student's black and slightly shiny uniform, or the tired housewife's cloth-wrapped parcel. When the train lurches, you are as likely as not to receive a magazine full in the face from your swaying neighbour, too intent on his article to notice your presence.

SOCIAL psychologists have commented that the pace of life in the United States is bringing into existence a new type of magazine, small, compact, swiftly readable, one that allows the eye to glide over it with a minimal engagement of the mind. If this be a reasonable explanation for the Quickies, the Peekies, and the Five-Minute Novels, which can be read on subways, at traffic stops while waiting for the signal to

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change, or shooting up to the sixtieth floor in a lift, then we must conclude that Japan is still a slow-motion country. Or that the average Japanese commuter's ride is so much longer than the American's that he needs a much larger magazine to fill in the time. A quick survey among my friends reveals that commuting up to three hours per day—one to one-and-a-half hours each way—is not uncommon. The added reading time that this permits has resulted in the development of a magazine of such heft that the ordinary reader in other countries would hesitate even to lift it up. I have before me an array of monthly magazines, all of a fairly "serious" type. The American *Atlantic Monthly* runs 122 pages; ENCOUNTER about 88; *Twentieth Century* about 84—while the issue I have in hand of the Japanese *Chuo Koron*, which is if anything more "serious" than these, runs to 374 pages!

All of this suggests a weightiness that is confirmed by figures. There are almost 1,300 different magazines published in Japan, with an annual total of about 360 million copies. Every month the National Railways carry about 14,300 tons of magazines in almost eight hundred freight-cars. If to this we add the 3,000 tons carried by trucks and estimate about 3,000 tons as the weight of magazines delivered within Tokyo, then we get a total delivered weight of about 20,000 tons of magazines per month. Dividing by the over-32 million individual numbers published, and making allowance for the weight of wrapping materials used in delivery, we get an average startlingly like one pound per copy.

Since at this very moment I am holding in my hand a thin magazine of no more than three ounces, I dread to think what this average of one pound implies at the other end. But let us stay with our statistics another moment. At 32 million copies per month, or between 360 and 400 million per year, we get an average of almost two magazines per month per family, or about 24 per year. Now by any standards this is a large readership. And if to this we add a 34 million daily newspaper circulation, or 2·2 newspapers per family, and an average of more than 130 million books published per year, or about eight per family, we cannot escape the conclusion that Japanese people spend a good part of their time reading—to put it mildly.*

It is no surprise that in any literate modern nation, magazines angled for a mass audience—light fiction, true stories, movie magazines, sports magazines, housewives' magazines, etc.—have large circulations. And Japan is no exception. A magazine with the singularly infelicitous title, one would think, of *Heibon*, which means "mediocrity," or "run-of-the-mill," or "ordinary," has the largest monthly circulation in the country, about 1·4 million. Similarly the *Ie no Hikari* ("Light of the Home"), a farm family magazine, runs over 1 million. Even the translated Japanese edition of the *Reader's Digest* finds 400,000 buyers. What is surprising is the extent to which serious writers are published in the popular magazines. One could not say that there is no distinction at all between popular and highbrow writers, but it certainly has much less significance here than in the West. "Good" writers appear with great frequency in the large mass-circulated magazines, not only in the elevated intellectual journals.

But what makes Japan distinctive above all is the vigour of its intellectual journalism. Serious magazines can be a commercially sound proposition. If we take as a rough working definition of "serious" those magazines that deal with ideas, literature, political analysis, art, etc., we shall find *several hundred* of all descriptions. To take a few random examples, there are seventeen "general magazines," almost sixty strictly literary magazines, twenty that concentrate on modern poetry, forty-eight given over to the traditional 31-syllable Japanese poem (the *tanka*), and fifty-one to the 17-syllable *haiku*—even the exotic *senryu* has eight. Their aggregate circulation must be somewhere in the neighbourhood of 10 per cent of the entire flow of periodical literature, and if the weeklies and children's magazines be excluded, almost 20 per cent. The single class of "general magazines," which corresponds in level approximately to the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, ENCOUNTER, and so on, is 5 per cent of the total national magazine circulation; but in Tokyo, which is the cultural centre of the country, it outstrips the "popular entertainment" magazines 26 per cent to 20 per cent, and if we were to consider the monthly adult magazines alone, the proportion in Tokyo would be even more impressive.

THE big three, the heavyweights of the "general magazine" world, are *Bungei Shunju* ("Literary Journal"), with a circulation of about 550,000; *Sekai* ("World"), about 120,000; and *Chuo Koron* ("Central Review"), about 110,000. (These are only rough estimates; circulation figures are closely guarded business, and even political, secrets.) For the really relentless intellectual, *Bungei Shunju* is practically a "popular magazine." In order to understand just

* One must sympathise with the 10th-century Emperor who was so astonished that his people should be able to read such vast quantities of poetry. The official anthology of twenty chapters was far too much, he complained. "I am sure for my part," said the Emperor, according to Sei Shonagon, the great diarist, "I shall never succeed in getting beyond Chapter Two."

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what this implies as to the snobbishness of Japanese readers, let us look at the contents of a typical issue. There were twenty-six major items —articles, stories, symposia—plus a dozen or more short items. Fifty or more writers can open its pages and find their bylines. We find such articles as "On the Spirit of Modern Escapism" by Professor Nakaya, the distinguished low-temperature physicist and the world's greatest authority on snow and ice crystals, who is also in constant demand as a writer and commentator; "Diplomacy, the Foreign Office, and Diplomats" by the late Professor Otaka, of the Law Faculty of Tokyo University; a symposium on the new course of Soviet politics participated in by a distinguished professor of economics, a Soviet specialist, and the Director of the International House; "The Relations of the Social and the Natural Sciences" by Professor Tsuru, the distinguished leftist economist; "Ricardo's Travel Record" by Dr. Koizumi, the former President of Keio University and now in charge of the Crown Prince's education; and so on. Certainly no lack of weight here. The explanation for its "unseriousness" in the eyes of some is partly that *Bungei Shunju* does not go along completely with the fashionable leftism of intellectual circles and partly that it makes a deliberate effort at readability. All of *Bungei Shunju's* writers are serious, but they write here in their somewhat less Teutonic and academic vein.

It is at the next level upward that we come to the standard fare of Japanese intellectuals and students. *Sekai* is a post-war magazine, now in its eleventh year, supported by the powerful Iwanami Publishing House. In October 1951, after several years of modest existence, it hit the jackpot with a special issue attacking the San Francisco peace treaty, and shot up from somewhat under 10,000 to its present figure, which varies between 100,000 and 200,000. It espouses a belligerent, muscular neutralism of the "peace camp" variety and it is most correctly characterised as a magazine of the "socialist camp" on the "intellectual front." *Chuo Koron*, now in its seventy-second year of publication, has a distinguished history in the intellectual life of modern Japan. In general it tries to steer a roughly non-partisan course, but since it is a magazine of, by, and for Japanese intellectuals, it cannot avoid inclining toward their dominant mood of the moment. It has therefore not always been distinguishable politically from *Sekai*.

A third member of this charmed circle, *Kaizo* ("Reconstruction"), with a circulation of about 70,000, and even more strenuously intellectual than the others, recently failed after thirty-five years of publication. The gap has been filled with an alarming alacrity, some of the readers having gone to other general magazines—*Chuo Koron*, for example, experienced a slight increase in circulation—and others, more ominously, to the fast-growing weeklies, which are taking on more and more the character of "general magazines," except that they are smaller, more readable, and cheaper. (*Chuo Koron* costs 150 yen, or about 3s., but a weekly costs only 9d.)

That monthlies may be reaching their limit is also suggested by the experience of the magazine Backed by a rumoured 20 million yen, *Shinron* date for membership in the charmed circle. *Shinron* ("New Review"), a right-wing candi-folded after three issues, unable to exceed 8,000 readers, and thus joined the growing procession of what the Japanese call the *sango zasshi*, that is, "three-issue magazines." But the spectacular success story of *Chisei* ("Intellect") shows that this trend is not irreversible. Starting with very little financial support, it has, in some two years, carved out for itself a devoted readership of at least 100,000. But *Chisei* has found a formula, has carefully defined its target (young readers with intellectual interests between the levels of *Bungei Shunju* and *Heibon*), and has even developed an organisation, the *Chisei* Clubs. By its own estimates, its readers are mainly young office workers, university and high-school students, and intellectually inclined teen-agers in the rural areas. Astutely edited, it is in the mainstream of Japanese intellectual life—that is, somewhat leftist, neutralist, pro-Red China, etc.

IF WE compare the Japanese general magazines with their counterparts in other countries, we are first struck by their enormous range. One wonders how anyone can find time to read them. And a little enquiry will turn up the shamefaced admission that many people buy them so as not to seem "non-intellectual," but do not really read them. Taking a magazine, particularly a serious magazine, is frequently an act of identification rather than a mere choice of reading matter. Many functions that we are accustomed to see divided among different types of magazines will be found together here. There is something for every taste. They seem to be simultaneously literary magazines, journals of political comment, and news reviews. They carry fiction, biography, essays, reportage, economic analyses, literary criticism, music and art criticism, symposia, and philosophical articles.

They also seem to feel it necessary to be up-to-the-minute in their news and political comment. Therefore political and economic writers are often called upon to knock out a piece at a few hours' notice. In urgent cases, the writer is locked away in a hotel room—if he is well known, his "prison" may be some elegant

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Japanese-style inn with hot spring baths and tempting foods—and messengers stand by, sometimes in relays, to rush each precious page as it is completed to the printers. There is no question that in this way a genuine topicality is attained, but it is often at the expense of sloppy writing. Thus the monthlies show, instead of the quiet, reflective, remoteness that we associate with them in the West, much of the tension and sensitivity of the daily newspaper office.

This jittery responsiveness to current events as well as the bitter competition among the magazines has brought on a race every month to see who can hit the streets first. Most magazines reach the stands a good two weeks before their face date. Thus the April issue of most magazines is already sold by March 15th. *Sekai* appears on the 7th of the month preceding its date of publication. But the *reductio ad absurdum* of this system is *Myojo* ("Morning Star") which appears forty-five days in advance!—its July issue appears on the stands on May 15th.

MAGAZINE economics, even in the case of the highbrow magazines, is very complex. Most important magazines are now firmly embraced within some sizeable enterprise. The Big Three newspapers operate chains of magazines, both monthlies and weeklies, as a kind of staff overflow from their regular operations, appealing to different levels of the population from elementary-school pupils to intellectuals. But for some reason, the upper end of the scale has not worked out, and their "general magazines" have all failed.

The powerful publishing houses have been more successful at this level. The Iwanami House, for example, the main publisher of academic works, has a whole string of intellectual and academic journals—their stable includes eleven serious magazines (like "Scientific Research," "Economic Research," "Biological Science," and "Agricultural Economics Research") with the general magazine *Sekai* as its front-runner. The more popular Kodansha Company works the other end of the range, with magazines for children, boys, girls, adolescents, women, etc.; however, even Kodansha feels it necessary to maintain a "general magazine" for purposes of prestige, though it loses money. Similarly, the publisher of *Heibon*, or "Mediocrity," which aims at the broadest mass circulation, feels obliged to support, at the other end of the scale, one of the most highbrow of all magazines, *Kokoro* ("Heart"), which is a kind of "small mag." of the older generation of intellectuals—what the Japanese refer to with both affection and contempt as the "old liberalists." The Shincho Company, which publishes the second largest number of book titles per year in Japan (almost nine hundred), maintains a string of highbrow magazines, topped by the "general magazine" *Shincho*.

All of this, as one might suspect, adds up to a paradise for the writer, even though many of them, without knowledge of conditions elsewhere, complain loudly all the time. Writers—by which I mean both the full-time professionals and the hosts of professors, diplomats, artists, and even businessmen who earn a measurable proportion of their income from writing—are called upon constantly for articles not only on their own specialities, where they may be presumed to have something to say, but also on matters very distant indeed. It is therefore not uncommon to find a professor of philosophy writing on the latest turn in Japanese-Soviet negotiations over fishery, or to hear the measured comments of an adventure-story writer on the promotion of trade with South-East Asia. It cannot be denied that all of this adds a certain freshness and liveliness to Japanese journalism. And it does break down some of the traditional ivory-tower isolation of the universities, keeping the scholars in touch with the public and its problems, and the public familiar with scholarly names. A survey several years back, for example, found that of the ten most popular writers among young people, three were professors; and that three of the ten largest contributors in the magazines (judged by the number of printed words in a sample period) were professors. But one cannot remark with equal confidence that this frenetic pace is good for the quality of the writing. The magazines are, of course, only one station on the busy round of publications—which includes the newspapers and weeklies as well. Writers are so busy filling the varied requests of the journals that they simply lack the time to read, to study, to write carefully, to reflect on their arguments. And in the universities, one often hears from students as well as from less fortunate faculty members the complaint that the "glamour boys," the popular writing-professors, neglect the preparation of their courses and lectures.

Another disturbing feature is that most writing is done on direct commission. The journal decides the subject and then commissions someone to write on it. In the case of my woman writer friend, for example, she has in the past year written three novels—two serialised in magazines, one in a daily newspaper—four short stories, twenty essays and journalistic pieces on political, social, feministic, literary, and international matters, plus about eighty weekly columns in the newspapers—all on direct request. This is in addition to a full programme of radio appearances, round-table discussions, and lectures. It is a long time since she has had

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the leisure to sit down to write simply because there was something she particularly wanted to write.

THIS would still not be so bad if one could be sure that the reader is as well served as the writer. To be sure, he is treated to an enormous range of subjects, a reasonably good coverage of world events, and a tremendous variety of creative literature. But does he get a balanced range of political views? The answer is, regrettably, no. As the English poet D. J. Enright noticed during his stay in Japan, "conservatives govern the country, but socialists govern the bookshops." In certain journals, what might be called the "premature anti-Stalinist" hasn't a chance. The writer who is too outspoken in his expression of non-standard political views will find that he runs the danger of being excluded from certain publishing outlets. Not from all, to be sure, but from enough to affect his earning capacity. Therefore many writers will carefully steer clear of subjects that might bring them afoul of prevailing editorial sentiment and brand them as "reactionaries"—the dreadest curse word among Japanese intellectuals—and cut off the flow of requests they need for making a living; or they will in the worst cases deliberately mis-state their true views. There have been any number of panegyrics on Soviet Russia and Communist China in the magazines by people who in private admit to entirely different judgments. The result is an appearance of political uniformity in the main serious journals that is not only misleading but harmful. Editors, writers, and readers are all caught up in the vicious circle. The writer writes in a certain way to be sure that he will continue to be published; the editor biases his selections because he feels that this is what his readers want (a conscientious editor does not even have to suppress non-conformist writers; all he has to do is to assign them to "safe" topics); and the reader feels that this is the weight of intelligent opinion because the best-known writers say it in the best-known journals.

But perhaps all of this is to be laid to the *Zeitgeist*, the political conditions of our times. If one can set these criticisms apart, then the Japanese serious magazines are probably—and from the standpoint of the writer, certainly—the liveliest and most successful in the world.

Herbert Passin

Where man is not . . .

AND I recall the grey unmoving river,
the ever-mirrored, never
To be explicated poles and signposts,

And gnats who never could sit still,
those creatures of more skill,
More sensitive than any vehicle of ours,

And hope and tenderness, quite unprovoked
by any human folk—
And yet what else could ever make it come?

But for our clumsy halting pace,
the midges' special gift and grace
Whoever would have recognised?

Without its man-made banks,
the river never could express its thanks
For my profound reflections.

D. J. Enright

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Dwight Macdonald

Politics Past (I)

A Backward Glance O'er Roads Once Travell'd more than Now

OVER here, wrote Emerson to Carlyle apropos the America of the 1830's, everyone you meet has a project for universal reform in his pocket. So did everyone that someone like Emerson might have met in the America of a century later (but our scripts were all Marxian). An interest in *avant-garde* politics was expected of every proper intellectual. Those few who were "unpolitical" were *déclassé*, accused of Escapism, Living in an Ivory Tower, etc. Even so unpolitical a type as Edmund Wilson signed *Culture and the Crisis*, a celebrated pamphlet-manifesto, in support of the Communist candidates in the 1932 presidential election. (Other signers included Sherwood Anderson, Newton Arvin, Erskine Caldwell, Malcolm Cowley, John Dos Passos, Theodore Dreiser, Sidney Hook, Sidney Howard, and Lincoln Steffens.) Later he wrote reportage for *The New Republic* on unemployed riots in Detroit, a trip to the Soviet Union, etc., joined the "Trotsky Committee," and spent several years learning Russian and German in order to read Marx and Lenin in preparation for *To the Finland Station*. Of latter years he has gone back—in the thirties I would have written "retreated"—to the literary interests he pursued in the unpolitical twenties. This parabola seems to me now quite natural, if only because I have described a similar arc myself, and I now think no one has a duty to interest himself in politics except a politician. Even in the thirties, we on *Partisan Review* defended the autonomy of art and opposed the Stalinist efforts to politicalise literature (also the Trotskyist efforts to integrate *P.R.* into their movement—we had a long, solemn, and, as of 1957, slightly comic debate by mail with Trotsky in Mexico on the subject). But this came from our head, and perhaps also from an instinct of self-preservation; in our hearts we felt, as did the Auden-Spender-Strachey-Orwell London of the thirties, that political interest, nay commitment, was an essential part of the equipment of The Compleat Thinker.

Things have changed. We are less interested today in radical politics—that is, parties, programmes, ideologies that assume a radical (in the sense of going to the roots) reconstruction of the old order. Indeed, one might almost say we aren't interested at all, and that this kind of politics no longer attracts intellectuals (who, since the time of Babeuf and Saint-Just, have normally been the most energetic propounders of radical ideas as well as the most faithful audience for them). The apathy and, not to put too fine a point on it, ignorance of the present younger generation about these matters is striking,

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and a little depressing, to one who like myself was young in the thirties.*

There are indications, as yet faint, that the post-war political *stasis* between the Western democracies and the Soviet world may be breaking up. Suez and Hungary are symptomatic—few events in years have aroused such strong emotions, because they are shocking, bewildering, suggestive of hitherto unsuspected flaws in our understanding of world politics. So perhaps this is a good time to look again at the forgotten experience of radical politics in the thirties and forties, if only because it is dangerous to forget the past.

I.

THE difference then and now in the New York intellectual atmosphere—in this context, New York is America, as Paris is France—is that then we believed in revolution and now we don't.† 1930–45 was filled with dramatic and terrible events: the depression, the rise of Nazism, the Spanish Civil War, the Moscow Trials, the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the war itself, Hitler's extermination of six million Jews, Stalin's murderous forced-labour camps, Truman's atomic bombings. These events aroused our sympathy and indignation, and we felt we ought to respond politically. And they were of such a drastic, unheard-of nature that we thought only an equally drastic solution would do.

In America, where even the most optimistic of us couldn't see revolution around the corner, or around several corners, the coming war was our trump card. We expected, or at least hoped, it would create "revolutionary situations" abroad as the First World War had, and that from these socialist influences might cross the Atlantic. ("Socialism in one country" was as historically inconceivable in advanced America as in backward Russia.) The situations did occur, but they never got beyond the embryonic stage; there was nothing like the 1917 Russian revolution, nothing like even the timid 1918 German revolution. In the fall of 1944, for instance, I wasted much space in *Politics*, a magazine I then edited, on the French Resistance's resistance to De Gaulle and the Anglo-American liberators, overestimating the programmes for a more democratic social order, which soon evaporated, and underestimating the rôle of the Communists, which didn't. Moscow was, of course, as frightened of revolutions as the West, and between them the two great imperial powers, U.S.A. and U.S.S.R., were able to control the post-war world. The "Third Camp" of the oppressed masses never got beyond the stage of a slogan and today is not even that. Therefore, most of us have made a "lesser evil" choice—the pages and pages of argumentation I have written exposing the illogic and immorality of this position! And since the imperfect democracy of the West is clearly a lesser evil than the perfected tyranny of the Communists, we have chosen the West.

While necessary, this choice is not very stimulating. (The prodigal son must have found home life, once the fatted calf was eaten, as boring as ever.) So intellectuals are

* Last spring I taught a course at Northwestern University, near Chicago, on the literary-political "Left" of the thirties and forties; of the forty-odd students who elected to take the course, a serious and able group, not one was a Marxist—Communist, Socialist, Trotskyist, or mugwump—a few leaned toward some kind of anarcho-pacifism, and the rest were either Republicans or Democrats. (I don't quarrel with the abandonment of Marxism—I've given it up myself—and I think anarchism makes more sense today than any other radical philosophy; it's all those Republicans and Democrats that worry me.) Similarly, last month I talked on the same subject before an undergraduate club at Cambridge; although they, too, seemed alert and intelligent, I might as well have been telling them about the myths and customs of the Trobriand Islanders.

† Though I remember once walking in the street and suddenly really *seeing* the big heavy buildings in their obstinate actuality and realising I simply couldn't imagine all this recalcitrant matter transformed by socialism. How would the street *look* when the workers took it over, how would, how could revolution transfigure the miles and miles of stubborn stone? I couldn't conceive of a flame hot enough to melt into new forms this vast solid Is.

A few years later, the bombing fleets did melt great sections of the world's cities and the political structure of many nations was also pulverised. But there was no energy to build Utopia on the ruins. Either the rickety old building was patched up, with a tarpaulin slung overhead to keep out the rain, as in France, or else the Communists imposed a new order much worse than the old. Such a mountain of destruction, such a political mouse!

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less interested in politics than they were, feeling that their special qualities of idealism and rationality, useful in times of radical change, are not much needed merely to keep things going. We have also become leery of revolution even if it were possible. If tradition, privilege, custom, and legality restrict, they also preserve, and after the Russian experience, it is hard to respond with the old enthusiasm to Bakunin's "Creative Destruction" or Marx's "Change the World!" One inclines to endure familiar evils rather than risk unknown and possibly greater ones. Even private property, detested by every right-thinking, that is left-thinking, intellectual in the thirties—the ordinary people had a more sensible view on this as on other matters—even this *bête-noire* of Marxism now presents a democratic aspect. A citizen with property has that much firmer a base of resistance to the encroachments of the State, as Jefferson and Madison knew, or Stalin when he forced the peasants into collective farms. Of course, Burke, Tocqueville, and other conservative thinkers have been telling us this for two hundred years, but nobody listened. The revival of a true, principled conservatism—not the bully-boy adventurism of McCarthy or the Suez Group—would be of the greatest value today. It is a task that would employ the special talents of intellectuals, and if it wouldn't give them the kick that revolutionism did, the hangover wouldn't be as bad either.

2.

I CAME late to the revolutionary movement (or what we then took to be such) partly because I went to Yale instead of, for example, "City College" (the College of the City of New York). Many of my Trotskyist comrades had begun handing out anti-war leaflets and marching in May Day parades while they were in short pants, and by the time they had started to shave were able to distinguish between social-revolution, social-democracy, and social-fascism. At thirty, when I first read Marx, they were scarred veterans of several left-wing parties and numberless "faction fights." If they were the Chattertons of revolution, I was its William De Morgan.

It wasn't that I wasn't by temperament as logical and combative as they were; just that for a long time my dissidence took non-political forms. Thus at Phillips Exeter Academy (1924–8) I was a founder of an exclusive club—there were only two other members—called The Hedonists. Our writing paper bore the motto, "*Pour Épater les Bourgeois*," and, boldly marching down the margin: "CYNICISM, ESTHETICISM, CRITICISM, PESSIMISM"; our culture-heroes were Oscar Wilde and H. L. Mencken; we wore monocles and purple batik club-ties at meetings, carried canes as much as we dared, and mimeographed two numbers of *Masquerade*, a magazine of extreme preciosity. At Yale I looked with bored amusement on the earnest handful who struggled to keep alive the Liberal Club—there were no campus Marxists in those pre-depression days, at least I never heard of any—but managed to get into trouble with the Dean by writing an editorial asking the venerable Professor William Lyon Phelps, a celebrated women's-club literary populariser of his day, who had undertaken a new course in Shakespeare, if he honestly thought he was competent to give it; with the President by writing him a man-to-man letter about the unreasonableness, injustice, and absurdity of compulsory chapel (he felt, among other things, that it was disrespectful to have used both sides of the paper); and with my fellow-students by trying to organise a "Hats Off!" campaign, a revolt of the lower classes—freshmen, sophomores, and juniors—against the exclusive privilege of the seniors not to wear a hat on the campus. When I graduated in 1928, I became a member, at $30 a week, of the Executive Training Squad at Macy's, the New York department-store. My plan was to make a lot of money rapidly and retire to write literary criticism. But I was appalled by the ferocity of inter-executive competition, I disliked the few big-shots I met (and doubtless *vice versa*), and I soon realised not only that I was without business talent but also that even a modest degree of success was possible only if one took mer-

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chandising far more seriously than I was able to.* After six months I was graduated from the Training Squad and offered a job at the necktie counter, salary $30 a week. I resigned and after a depressing hiatus of a month or two, for I had no income, I got a writing job, through a Yale classmate, on Henry Luce's embryonic *Fortune*.

The first issue of *Fortune*, a lushly illustrated dollar-a-copy monthly dreamed up by Luce to celebrate the "saga" of American business, appeared shortly after the stock-market collapse in the fall of 1929 that inaugurated the Great Depression. Many entrepreneurs would have given up, but Luce had the Stalingrad spirit and persisted—the magazine still appears, in a more sober and sophisticated mode—and I with him. There was a difference, however, in our evolution. I became increasingly sceptical about American capitalism, which I saw at close quarters, interviewing businessmen and writing about their companies — Corning Glass, International Silver, Republic Steel, W. T. Grant chain stores, Standard Oil of New Jersey, etc. My undergraduate suspicions were confirmed —the men running our capitalist system were narrow, uncultivated, and commonplace; they had an eye for the main chance and a knack for business as unrelated to other qualities as a talent for chess, and they could have been replaced as our ruling class without any damage to our culture, or effect on our society, by an equal number of citizens picked at random from the phone-book; their social and economic theories, or rather prejudices, were childish; their Republican Party was as unable to cope with the depression as they were. The New Deal was inspiriting to me, as to my fellow-writers on *Fortune*. To Luce's dismay, we became increasingly liberal; we wanted to write about Roosevelt's farm programme, about the N.R.A. (National Recovery Administration), the C.I.O., the Wagner Act, unemployment, social security, anything but business. Luce was divided between his pro-business convictions and his journalistic instinct, which told him the C.I.O. was news and that the wonders of American Cyanamid Co. weren't (at least temporarily)—his typically American pragmatic fascination with Power and Success told him the same thing. He compromised (as did we) and for a few years *Fortune* was a pastiche of mildly liberal articles on "social" themes—I even got into print an objective, though extremely unsophisticated, article on the American Communist Party—and reluctantly written "corporation pieces" dealing with enterprises that had somehow managed to make a profit. The conflict was resolved, in my case, by a series of articles on the U.S. Steel Corporation which I wrote in the winter and spring of 1936. I had by then begun to read Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky and had become a mild supporter of the Communists, who seemed to me, as a political neophyte (and as another American-style pragmatist) to be the only radical group that was "doing something." The more research I gathered about U.S. Steel, the more it became evident that this biggest steel company in the world was an inept colossus that benefited neither its workers (wages were low and trade unionism forcibly discouraged), its customers (prices were kept high by monopolistic practices), nor its "owners," the stockholders, who got slim dividends because the Steel Corporation, antiquated and inefficient, made the most meagre of profits. The series became more and more critical, and the fourth and final instalment, which I headed with a cheerful quotation from Lenin's *Imperialism* to the effect that monopoly was the last stage of capitalism and led "inevitably" to socialism, was so bowdlerised by Luce's editors* that I resigned in protest. The protest was the easier to make in that (a) I had grown tired of writing for *Fortune*, which was stimulating when I was learning

* Cf. the dream every American little-magazine writer has had, at some time, of financing his serious work by writing pot-boilers. I have never heard of this working out. It seems one must be wholehearted even to be a successful hack.

* Notably by Ralph McAllister Ingersoll, then managing editor, who two or three years later founded the left-liberal daily, *P.M.*, with capital supplied by Marshall Field III and a staff supplied largely from the Stalinist ambience. Such whirligig changes, such conjunctions, were typical of the period.

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the craft of journalism but whose mental horizon now seemed restrictive, and (b) I had accumulated some savings and my wife had an income from a trust fund.

3.

For much of the year after I left *Fortune* I gathered material for a history of the American steel industry which never got written, partly because I seem unable to sit down and write a book in cold blood, so to speak—the three I have published, *Henry Wallace, the Man and the Myth* (1948), *The Root Is Man* (1953), and *The Ford Foundation* (1956), were written as serial magazine articles — and partly because my belated interest in politics now grew so rapidly as to make economic history seem academic. Toward the end of my time on *Fortune*, I had become a mild fellow-traveller, giving pay-parties for Class-War Martyrs like Angelo Herndon, attending Stalinist-sponsored meetings to help Southern sharecroppers, support the Theatre Union, free Tom Mooney, etc., and accepting as a matter of course their guidance in founding the *Time-Fortune* unit of the Newspaper Guild (which they later took over, to my intense disgust—I had by then become a Trotskyist—and dominated for a few years). Then, in the late winter of 1937, I read *The Case of the Anti-Soviet Center*, a thick volume printed in Moscow and sold for a pittance in the Party's bookstores, which gave the verbatim transcript of the second Moscow Trial. It was fascinating reading, and, I must admit, persuaded me, for a time, that *some* kind of conspiracy was going on; later I began to notice contradictions, lack of motivation, and absence of supporting evidence. But even a first reading, with a pro-Soviet bias, convinced me of the absurdity of the trial's main political thesis: that Trotsky had conspired with representatives of Hitler, Mussolini, the Mikado, and most of the surviving Bolshevik leaders to kill Stalin and restore capitalism in Russia.*

A lead review of the book by Malcolm Cowley in *The New Republic* took the hypocritical line both American liberal weeklies (*The Nation* was the other) followed on the Trials—"suspending judgment until more conclusive evidence is produced" while actually endorsing the essentials of the prosecution's case and smearing Trotsky and the defendants. This stimulated me to write a five-page letter-to-the-editor, of which, after considerable haggling, they printed a third. Instantly I received an invitation, and accepted it, to join the Committee for the Defence of Leon Trotsky, headed by John Dewey, which had been formed to find a refuge for Trotsky, to look into the charges against him, and to give him a hearing. The "Trotsky Committee" attracted an extraordinary roster of intellectuals—the Stalinist cultural front was never the same again—and achieved its aims; Trotsky was admitted to Mexico, the Trials were thoroughly investigated, and he testified at length before a commission headed by Dr. Dewey.

That spring (1937) I made my début as a liberal journalist with a three-part, now-it-can-be-told serial on the Luce magazines in *The Nation*. Extrapolating the rightward trend of *Time* (it admired Franco and Mussolini and contemned Blum, the C.I.O., and the New Deal) and of Luce himself, I talked about "proto-fascism" and predicted that, as the class war hotted up, the Luce papers would drop the "proto." I was wrong —extrapolation is a dangerous toy for a Marxist, like giving a Sten gun to a baby; the class war cooled down as the C.I.O. solidified itself in the mass industries and Roosevelt, with his 1938 "Quarantine the Aggressor" speech in Chicago, began to develop an interventionist foreign policy that at last brought back prosperity and also pleased a large section of the Right. Henry Luce

* "For nothing at all, just for the sake of Trotsky's beautiful eyes," testifies Radek (p. 543) apropos an alleged letter from Trotsky "which, unfortunately, I burned" as he, unfortunately, burned all the others, "the country was to return to capitalism. When I read this, I felt as if I were in a madhouse." I agreed, but wondered if the head-keeper's name was Trotsky or Stalin. It shows, by the way, how far the Stalinists had already lost contact with reality that they took such pains to circulate a document that could only arouse grave doubts in most non-Party readers.

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soon kicked upstairs the pro-Franco Foreign News editor and reoriented his magazines in a more liberal direction. Similarly, U.S. Steel, within a year after my articles appeared, had peacefully signed a contract with the C.I.O., and was gently modernising itself. The credit for these improvements should probably go to the *zeitgeist*, and the coming war, rather than to the power of the pen.

My début on *The Nation* was also a farewell tour, for I soon became politically *non grata* with the liberal weeklies. The speed with which I evolved from a liberal into a radical and from a tepid Communist sympathiser into an ardent anti-Stalinist still amazes me. It was much the quickest of my political transformations—which some have seen as indicating an open mind, others as evidence of levity—probably because the Soviet myth is least able to bear close inspection. Presently, along with two Yale friends, F. W. Dupee and George L. K. Morris, I was treating with Philip Rahv and William Phillips, the disaffected editors of the leading Communist literary magazine, *Partisan Review*. Rahv and Phillips had founded *P.R.* in 1934—twenty-three years later, they still edit it, an unprecedented run in the little-magazine world—as the "organ" of the John Reed Clubs, then the Party's literary front. They had suspended *P.R.* in 1936 for several good reasons: the Party's heavy-handed "proletarian-literature" line; the Moscow Trials and other Soviet scandals, which had shaken their political faith; and the new turn away from ultra-revolution to a "popular front" with the New Deal which had caused the Party to lose interest in *avant-garde* efforts like *P.R.* and to yearn for bigger, if less pure, cultural enterprises. By the end of 1937, the five of us had revived *P.R.* on a new basis. We announced our political independence, though confessing a bias for revolutionary socialism and against Stalinism; we also defended the Autonomy of Culture, which meant we selected our poems, stories, and articles according to intrinsic merit rather than ideology. The Communist press accused us of social-fascism, Trotskyism, infantile ultra-leftism, White Guardism, dilettantism, hypocrisy, venality, and grand larceny (this last in reference to the rape of *P.R.*). In the *Daily Worker*, V. J. Jerome, the Party's Matthew Arnold, drew a lurid and, alas, false picture of us being incessantly "wined and dined by the *haute bourgeoisie*." (It was an interesting case of Freudian projection—he had himself just returned from a missionary tour in Hollywood, where they really know how to wine and dine a comrade.) The usual efforts were made to get writers to boycott us, but the Moscow Trials had done their work and, if Howard Fast and Albert Maltz were adamant in refusing to write for us, we were able to rub along with Dos Passos, Farrell, Gide, Silone, Orwell, Mary McCarthy, Delmore Schwartz, Meyer Schapiro, Edmund Wilson, and T. S. Eliot.

A good part of the next five years I spent helping edit *P.R.* and writing for it. Other activities, typical of the period, were:

—organising committees. Ex.: The League for Cultural Freedom and Socialism (not to be confused with the Committee for Cultural Freedom, a reformist copy-cat got up by Sidney Hook and others which is a remote ancestor of ENCOUNTER's sponsor), whose initial Statement (1938) was addressed to "all artists and writers who are concerned about the present drift of the United States to reaction and war."

—writing protests and getting Names to sign them. Ex.: a cable in the fall of 1939 to President Daladier denouncing the imprisonment of thirty French intellectuals including Alain, Jean Giono, and Marceau Pivert, because they signed an anti-war pamphlet. Ex.: a press release, signed by some Names, pointing out the falsifications in the film Warner Brothers had made, *circa* 1943, as their private lend-lease offering, out of ex-Ambassador Davies' *Mission to Moscow*.

—writing letters-to-the-editor. Ex.: one to *The Nation* pointing out its correspondent's failure to report the Communists' control of the 1937 American Writers Congress, whose sessions I had attended as a delegate. (I remember praising Trotsky's prose style amid a murmurous hush.)

—writing letters to editors. Ex.: a tense correspondence at the end of 1937 with

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Freda Kirchwey, editor of *The Nation*, an ironical antistrophe to the memorandum I had written my employer, Henry Luce, the year before, demonstrating with examples *Time*'s right-wing bias ("In times like these, a truly objective and impartial magazine wd. perform a unique and extremely valuable service.") "I've long had the idea that *The Nation* exists to tell the truth about social issues," I wrote Miss Kirchwey, striking again the note of histrionic pathos in my conclusion: "But it now appears that *The Nation*, like *Fortune*, has its commitments. A journalistic investment in Soviet Russia seems to me no more admirable than one in Big Business. . . . I'm genuinely disturbed. . . ." (I wasn't at all disturbed—just angry.)

—reading and answering letters from Marxist thinkers, both ends of the correspondence tending to length. Ex.: a communication from a German refugee in Havana in 1942 (". . . If you want, I would send you a copy of my manuscript. . . . To give you an idea about the whole: First Part: historical—the antecedents of fascism in Germany; general backwardness plus absolutism plus protestantism. Liberty, egality as sloogans of the national foe. . . . A small general chapter about imperialism. . . . Part II: The fascist revolution as social revolution. . . . E. Conclusion about: what is totalitarism? with quotations of most important definitions of Marx. . . . Bukharin's conceptions; contradictions inside the system. . . . Now you see. Unhappily I hadn't at my disposition the major part of material and books — there isn't not even The Statistical Abstract of the U.S. in Havana (!). . . . Perhaps you could find out if an american editor would take it, eventually. People here are criminally unreliable, criminally unserius.")

—reading the *N.Y. Times* closely every day (one hour), looking for signs and portents of social change; also clipping it lavishly; between 1937 and 1947 I accumulated bales of carefully filed clippings, almost all of which had finally to be thrown away, unused, in self-defence. (The *N.Y. Times* was to us what Aristotle was to the medieval scholastics—a revered authority, even though Pagan, and a mine of useful information about the actual world.)

—reading (and underlining) long, heavy works in economics, politics, and sociology: Marx, Engels, Trotsky, Lenin, and Luxemburg; Mosca, Michels, and Pareto; Hobson, Hilferding, and Sombart; even a little Kautsky and Plekhanov; contemporary works like John Strachey's *The Coming Struggle for Power* and R. Palme Dutt's *Fascism* (these two were the bibles of my pre-Trotskyist days), Berle & Means' *The Modern Corporation and Private Property*, Ferdinand Lundberg's *America's Sixty Families*, the Lynds' *Middletown*, and James Burnham's *The Managerial Revolution* (which I reviewed unfavourably at length in *P.R.*—the others I admired, then); also an incredible quantity of "data" books on Nazism and on Soviet Communism plus the multi-volumed reports of the period's Congressional investigations—which, unlike more recent ones, were all liberal in tendency—the Nye munitions or "merchants of death" investigation, the LaFollette civil-liberties committee, the "Monopoly Committee," the Truman and Toland committees during the war. For some reason, I don't seem to get around to reading this sort of thing any more.

4.

IN THE summer of 1938 I began to contribute to *The New International*, the Trotskyists' theoretical monthly. (My contributions, which went on for the next four years, were rather more journalistic than most of the *N.I.*'s contents—I never got very far as a Marxist theoretician.) This was partly due to the urging of James Burnham, then one of the Trotskyist leaders, whom I had known since I had written for *The Symposium*, the elegant, even dandified quarterly he and Philip Wheelwright had put out for a time around 1932. (About then, I had also been an editor—with Dupee and Morris—of a similar, though less elegant, venture, *The Miscellany*; it was an era of "little" magazines; typically, neither *Symposium* nor *Miscellany* showed any interest in politics.) Not that I needed much urging. The Trotskyist movement was at that period attractive to people like me because it was the most revolutionary of the sizeable left-wing groups

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(by "sizeable" I mean over 200), because of the moral shock of the Moscow Trials, because of its high intellectual level (the *N.I.* was probably then the best Marxist magazine in English, and we used to look down our snobbish noses on the Socialists as simple-minded and the Communists as corrupt as well), and above all because it was led by Trotsky, whose career showed that intellectuals, too, could make history.

In the late thirties, the *avant-garde* political spectrum looked like this, reading from right to left: *Communists* (who had moved overnight, on orders from Moscow, from the far left to the extreme right, becoming "critical supporters" of the New Deal and later not-at-all-critical supporters of the war), *Social Democrats* (a small but well-heeled group of ageing right-wing Socialists centering around the Rand School and the weekly *New Leader*), *Socialists* (led by Eugene Debs in World War One and now by Norman Thomas), *Communist Party (Opposition)* which *circa* 1935 became either *The Marxist Educational League* or something else (they were always called "the Lovestoneites" after their leader, Jay Lovestone, whom Stalin had deposed from the leadership of the American Communist Party in 1929 because Lovestone was an adherent of Bukharin; all groups to the left of the Lovestoneites sneered at them as "centrists," a fighting word, because they tried to steer a middle course between reform and revolution), *Socialist Workers Party* (Trotskyites, led by James P. Cannon and Max Shachtman, former Communists who had founded the party when Trotsky was exiled by Stalin in 1929 and who still lead it —or rather each leads one of the halves into which it split in 1940), *Socialist Labour Party* (followers—or, as we called them, "epigones," another fighting word—of Daniel De Leon, a turn-of-the-century theoretician whom Lenin had called the only American to have made a contribution to Marxian theory, an accolade about equal to a K.C.B.; the De Leonites were so pure they opposed trade unions as "reformist sops to the toiling masses"; one never ran into them or read their press; they were not intellectuals but real lower-middle-class workers, like the Jehovah's Witnesses, and like the Witnesses they continue stubbornly to exist, putting out primitive-Marxist tracts whose typography and diction are so antiquated as to raise a suspicion they have been using up an overstock from De Leon's time; they run a Presidential candidate every four years, an activity which, not being intellectuals, they conduct with remarkable energy and method—in 1952 they got more votes than the much better-known Socialist Party), and a whole brigade of "ites," tiny groups that were in a constant fever of birth or dissolution, splitting or merging—the Fieldites, the Stammites, the Ohlerites, the Marlenites (literally a family party, the majority faction of which was alleged to consist of Mr. and Mrs. George Marlen and their parents, children, and collateral relations), and the Weisbordites (an intransigent little band led by Albert Weisbord, whose one big moment came, unfortunately, at the very beginning of his career, in the late twenties, when, just out of Harvard, he led to victory the great Passaic textile strike).

The evolution of the Weisbordites was typical, if a bit extreme, of these "splinter groups" (chips off the old Marxist block) as was their leader, brilliant and able but devoured by the worm of sectarianism which dieth not. The "ites" dropped off one by one until the Revolutionary League of America or whatever it was called—the title generally made up in scope for any restriction of numbers—consisted of the leader and his wife. Then there was a divorce, and the advance-guard of the revolution was concentrated, like a bouillon cube, in the small person of Albert Weisbord, who sat for years at his secondhand desk behind the dusty glass door proudly emblazoned REVOLUTIONARY LEAGUE OF AMERICA—HEADQUARTERS writing his party organ and cranking it out on the mimeograph machine. This contrivance played the same part in the American revolutionary movement that machine-guns did in the Russian. The mimeographs were the instruments of production, which, as any Marxist schoolboy knows, are the base of power of every ruling class, and many a

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faction-fight was decided by who seized control of them first.

The splinter groups looked on us Trotskyists as we looked on the Communists, as opportunists who had sacrificed principle for popularity. Nor could it be denied that, compared to theirs, our party membership was vulgarly large. We had about 800 members.

5.

FROM the fall of 1939 to the spring of 1941, I was a member of the Trotskyist party. My decision to join was, perhaps typically, moral rather than intellectual. I remember reading Marx and Engels intensively in the summer of 1939 in an effort to find out whether I was a Marxist or not. I could never really make up my mind: the critical side attracted me, and also the protest against capitalist injustice, but the dogmatism and the insistence on explaining everything by one system of thought repelled me (as did a certain moral callousness). When the war began, however, I felt I should stand with the party. James P. Cannon tried to convince me I was more valuable, and would be happier, as a sympathiser than as a member; perhaps he felt a fatherly concern at my political innocence; perhaps he suspected I would be a troublesome recruit; perhaps both. And in fact I was always a "new boy" in the party, looked on by my comrades as a bit of a political dilettante; they centred their lives in "the movement," finding their friends and even their wives or husbands within it, but my friends and work (*P.R.*) were mostly outside; nor were they reassured by my criticisms of the dogmatic and undemocratic elements in Leninism.

A few months after I joined the party, the Red Army invaded Finland and a faction-fight broke out which by the spring had broken up the party into two parties. (Like divorce, a "split" in a Marxist party was dreaded even by those who longed for it, and each side tried to manœuvre the other into taking the guilt.) On one side was Cannon, backed (alas) by Trotsky, insisting we must support the Russians because theirs was a "workers' state" ("degenerated") and therefore the Red Army was bringing socialism (degenerated) to the Finns. The minority faction, to which I enthusiastically adhered, was led by Shachtman and Burnham; we held that the invasion was imperialist aggression and therefore opposed it. "Support" and "oppose" had no practical meaning, of course; the Cannonites didn't volunteer for the Red Army (which would have shot them); nor did any Shachtmanites go to Finland to fight under Baron Mannerheim. The controversy expressed itself not in action or even in proposals for action but in interminable and (to me) exciting party meetings and tall stacks of mimeographed articles in the "Internal Bulletin."*

I found the struggle educational—I learned a good deal about Marxist theory, the Soviet Union, methods of argument, and party organisation—but frustrating. I couldn't get into the fight. I wrote three long articles for the Internal Bulletin but, although I had had no trouble getting printed in *Fortune*, *Harper's*, *The Nation*, *The New Yorker*—or, for that matter, the *N.I.*—my manuscripts were monotonously rejected. The eight hundred members of the party, steeped in Marxicology, aged in the Bolshevik-Leninist wood, were a highly esoteric audience, while I was a highly exoteric writer. Finally I managed to break into print, or rather mimeograph, with a modest little piece titled "Shamefaced Defensism." This was an analysis of a current article by Trotsky in a

* The speeches were long and good; Cannon took two and a half hours at one meeting, and Schachtman replied in four; both were excellent speakers, in different styles; Cannon being direct, incisive, and at times majestic, while Shachtman was fiery and sarcastic; in general, the Party's rhetorical level was high. The Internal Bulletin was restricted to party members, each of whom received one numbered copy; disagreement on "principled issues" could not be aired in public, that is, in the *N.I.* (which, so far as the *general* public went, was itself an internal bulletin), the precepts of Lenin's "democratic centralism" allowing disagreement on important matters to be expressed only inside the party. My old bundles of the Internal Bulletin make dry reading today—one's chief reaction is a sorrowful wonder at the amount of intellectual energy spent on rather scholastic polemics—but then we devoured them like detective stories.

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mass-circulation magazine called *Liberty*: I demonstrated that The Old Man was much tougher on Stalin's Russia (and the Red Army) in the bourgeois press than in the Internal Bulletin, and I gave some disrespectful reasons therefor. The article roused the majority faction to fury, not because of its arguments, which they paid no attention to, but simply because a new boy had talked back to the principal. (Besides the Russian Question, there was another important point of disagreement between the factions—the minority wanted a more democratic party, while the majority thought there was too much democracy running around already.) "These *parvenus* who have hardly wet their feet in the water of the class struggle and who presume to polemise with Trotsky on political questions!" thundered Cannon, fatherly no more, at a meeting of the Downtown Branch (mine), while The Old Man himself wrote a waspish message from Coayacan under the headline, "BACK TO THE PARTY!":

> Dear Comrades,
>
> . . . The opposition leaders seem to have passed over into guerilla warfare. It is the fate of many other defeated armies. One of the most curious examples is the more valiant than sensible attack of comrade Macdonald on my *Liberty* article. He didn't find, you see, in this article an analysis of the contradictory character of the Soviet state and of the "progressive" rôle of the Red Army. With the same logic which he shows in the editing of *Partisan Review* as in his analysis of the Kronstadt uprising,* he discovers that I am "in reality" a minorityite, a Shachtmanite, or a Macdonaldist. . . . If we should express Macdonald's discovery in a more articulate manner, it would signify: when Trotsky wishes to adapt himself to the readers of *Liberty*, he writes like Shachtman and almost like Macdonald, but when he speaks to the party, he becomes terribly anti-minority. *Partisan Review* is very interested in psychoanalysis and I permit myself to say that the editor of this review, if he analyses himself a bit, would recognise that he has uncovered his own subconscious.

* I had written a letter to the *N.I.*, criticising Trotsky's defence of the suppression of the Kronstadt mutiny; it appeared in the same issue (July 1938) that contained my first article for the paper; I was always a little schizoid about Trotskyism, as about Marxism. . . . Apropos the sneer at *P.R.*, it was interesting that, while the Stalinists were sure the magazine was secretly affiliated to the Trotskyists, the latter were constantly attacking it.

(*To be concluded next month*)

Drive

I ride in a car, alone to be free,
Driving past houses (and looking ahead)
Where inside, the infants reaching toward me
Share with my heart the wish to be fed—
Except that the infants are really there,
And alone for a ride in a car is where?

Nathaniel Zimskind

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Three Poems by Apollinaire

Le Dromadaire

Avec ses quatre dromadaires
Don Pedro d'Alfaroubeira
Courut le monde et l'admira.
Il fait ce que je voudrais faire
Si j'avais quatre dromadaires.

Dromedary

Four dromedaries carried you
Don Pedro d'Alfaroubeira
Round the great world with Oh and Ah.
What you did is what I should do
Had I four dromedaries too.

Rosemonde

Longtemps au pied du perron de
La maison où entra la dame
Que j'avais suivie pendant deux
Bonnes heures à Amsterdam
Mes doigts jetèrent des baisers

Mais le canal était désert
Le quai aussi et nul ne vit
Comment mes baisers retrouvèrent
Celle à qui j'ai donné ma vie
Un jour pendant plus de deux heures

Je la surnommai Rosemonde
Voulant pouvoir me rappeler
Sa bouche fleurie en Hollande
Puis lentement je m'en allai
Pour quêter la Rose du Monde

Rosemonde

For a long time on the step
Of the house the lady went
Into that I'd followed for
Two good hours in Amsterdam
Kisses flew up from my fingers

But the canal was empty and
So was the quayside no one saw
How my kisses followed her
Whom I'd given my whole life
For more than two long hours that day

So I named her Rosemonde
Wanting to remember her
Mouth that had flowered in Holland
Then I slowly went away
Seeking the Rose of all the World

Marizibill

Dans la Haute-Rue à Cologne
Elle allait et venait le soir
Offerte à tous en tout mignonne
Puis buvait lasse des trottoirs
Très tard dans les brasseries borgnes

Elle se mettait sur la paille
Pour un maquereau roux et rose
C'était un Juif il sentait l'ail
Et l'avait venant de Formose
Tirée d'un bordel de Changaï

Je connais gens de toutes sortes
Ils n'égalent pas leur destins
Indécis comme feuilles mortes
Leurs yeux sont des feux mal éteints
Leurs cœurs bougent comme leurs portes

Marizibill

In the High Street of Cologne
Evenings she came and went
Pretty enough for anyone
Then drank tired of that pavement
Late in one-eyed bars alone

But never put a farthing by
Had a red-haired rosy ponce
Jew smelt of garlic caught his eye
Coming from Formosa once
In a brothel in Shanghai

I know all kinds none are quite
Equal to their fates and doubt
Shakes them like dead leaves their bright
Eyes are fires not quite out
Hearts bang like their doors all night

translated by Oliver Bernard

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Burns Singer

Scarlet Eminence

A Study of the Poetry of Hugh MacDiarmid

PHYSICALLY he is a magnificent mouse of a man. I remember him best as he used to sit, sagged back in front of his fireplace, his legs plaited together and curled beneath his armchair, one hand, the left, lying indolently beside him while the right one gripped his black pipe. Then he would bend down forwards to tap out ash on the hearth and, as he did so, his head would turn sideways towards where I sat. That head looked huge. The hair curled up from it like the grey-brown smoke of a volcano and, though his expression betrayed no more than a quick slant of curiosity, the force of the man became apparent. The features were small and squeezed into the lower half of the face, the brow high and myriad wrinkled, the nose a sharp jut forwards, the eyes sunk in deep sockets as though eroded by a surfeit of sight; the whole composition denied his posture of repose. Then, at last, when he rose and walked across the room with that swift jerky gait of his, talking all the while, as though keeping time to his footsteps, in a learned staccato, one would glimpse the vigour that had written his twenty-odd books and his millions of words of invective.

By the time I met Hugh MacDiarmid he was over fifty but his physical appearance had probably changed very little since those days some twenty years before when he had published his first book of Scots lyrics, *Sangschaw*. At that time, he was already employed in the exercise of his vituperative genius. It was directed against such minor and local figures as, among others, Sir Hugh Roberton, the conductor of the Orpheus Choir. Since then he had enlarged the scope of his attacks but they were still bitter and violent. The poems of those years possessed, however, an unusual delicacy and established him as the greatest lyric poet in Lowland Scots since at least the time of Burns. The first volume and its successor, *Pennywheep*, are both small books containing small poems that have a seriousness of intention and a sophistication of manner comparable to the best European poetry of the twenties. The range is limited and can be roughly defined as lying between such charming trifles as the following poem for his child:

The auld men o' the sea
Wi' their daberlack hair
Ha'e dackered the coasts
O' the country fell sair.

They gobble owre cas'les
Chow mountains to san'
E'er lang they'll eat up
The haill o' the lan',

Lickin' their white chops
An' yowlin' for mair,
The auld men o' the sea
Wi' their daberlack hair.

* Daberlack = seaweed; dacker = attack; chow = chew; yowlin' = howling.

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and the deeply significant statements of a personal or philosophic kind which are found in others.

As an example of the more private of these manners his elegy to his first wife deserves quotation:

Ae weet forenicht, in the yow trummle,
I saw yon antrin thing,
A watergaw wi' its chitterin' licht
Ayont the on-ding:
And I thocht o' the last wild look you gied
Afore you deid.

There was nae reek in the laverock's hoose
That nicht—nor nane in mine:
But I ha'e thocht o' that foolish licht
Ever sin' syne:
And I think that mebbe at last I ken
*What your look meant then.**

That the person who had died was the poet's wife is powerfully and economically suggested by the one phrase: "*nor nane in mine.*" The death of a friend or even a child would hardly affect a man's home to this extent: but his mother's house, on the other hand, would not be thought of as "mine" in the proprietary sense implicit in this phrasing. The poem is thus deeply personal yet it overlooks imaginative immensities hardly ever visible from previous peaks in Scots verse. From the vantage point of these verses a world is seen in which, as in Heraclitus, everything is on the point of disappearing into its opposite. It is evening, so that night is overcoming day. The ewes vibrate in the cold as spring refuses to give way to summer. The poet's home has become an exposed hovel, bleak with memories, like the deserted nest of the lark. And the whole outside world mirrors the personal calamity of a man who has lost his wife. For love, which is the supreme affirmation of life, has been altered into despair. Yet within these sad changes their reverse is already incipient. Night is answered by a promise of morning, the storm by a sign of the coming calm, and even the shivering of the sheep gives hope that summer will indeed arrive. This wavering certainty emerges from the twilight as the love and faith of the dead woman filtered through the agony of her final moments and condensed itself into a "*last wild look.*" The look was as tenuous as the hope inspired by a rainbow, and much more ambiguous. Is it a belief in immortality that it means to convey? Is it just the assurance that whatever happens the poet has once been loved completely? Or is it a confirmation of his own love and the discovery that it will last as long as life? There is no hint in the poem. I believe it is all of these, and something else as well, something that cannot be explicitly stated but which is conveyed by the heavy slow majesty of the verse as it moves.

* Forenicht = evening; yow trummle = period of year just after ewes have been shorn; antrin = strange; watergaw = rainbow; ayont = beyond; on-ding = downpour; nae reek in the laverock's hoose = a wet and stormy night (lit. there was no warmth in the lark's house).

AN EVEN heavier rhythm is found in some still shorter poems of a more impersonal nature. Here the density of the Lallans vocabulary intensifies the dismal solidity of the thought. The counterpoint between objective and subjective worlds is maintained as it is throughout Hugh MacDiarmid's life's work. Objective reality is seen as reinforcing subjective tendencies in the mind of man.

I' the how-dumb-deid o' the cauld hairst nicht
The warl' like an eemis stane
Wags in the lift;
An' my eerie memories fa'
Like a yowdendrift:

Like a yowdendrift so's I couldna read
The words cut oot i' the stane
Had the fug o' fame
An' history's hazelraw
*No' yirdit thaim.**

Or is it the subjective which supports the objective? Both processes are in action. The meaning of life is hidden by the sheer mass

* How-dumb-deid = very dead; hairst = harvest; eemis = precariously balanced; lift = sky; yowdendrift = snowdrift; hazelraw = a lichen; yirdit = buried.

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of events, by the number of lives that must be justified, by the length of time involved; as well as being obfuscated by the clutter of personal experience, the paraphernalia of conflicting guilts.

MacDiarmid has never lost the technical delicacy which allows him to concentrate thought, fact, and emotion in a few significant and well-ordered phrases. His slow renunciation of Lallans has merely brought to a larger public this earliest gift of the gods. His elegy for the Scottish poet, John Davidson, who committed suicide by walking into the sea off Cornwall, is typical of many slender but firm lyrics written in English:

I remember one death in my boyhood
That next my father's, and darker, endures
Not Queen Victoria's, but Davidson, yours,
And something in me has always stood
Since then looking down the sandslope
On your small black shape by the edge of the sea
—A bullet-hole through a great scene's beauty,
God through the wrong end of a telescope.

Or again, in attenuated Scots, *Deep-sea Fishing*:

I suddenly saw I was wrang when I felt
That the gapin' mooths and gogglin' een
O' the fish were no' what we should expect
Frae a sea sae infinite and serene.

I kent I'd be equally wrang if I wished
My nice concern wi' its beauty to be
Shared by the fishermen wha's coarser lives
Seemed proof to a' that appealed to me.

Aye, and I kent their animal fears
And primitive minds, like fish frae the sea,
Cam, faur mair naturally oot o' the bland
Omnipotence o' God than a fribble like me.

The apparent modesty of this last poem is only apparent. MacDiarmid is not a humble man. But Auden was right: poetry is born of humiliation, and the humble man cannot be humiliated. He begins by admitting his inferiority. After that admission he can never again be reduced to it. Repeated humiliation gives one the courage to fail. Modesty demands its modest successes. Of these last MacDiarmid has had very few. He has consistently aimed at the highest and the deepest poetry and has shown contempt for all those who are content with anything less.

This contempt is both motivation and message for the brutal severity of his pamphleteering. Communism and Scottish nationalism are the causes he has condescended to defend, but the virulence and, often, the vulgarity of his attacks on their enemies have embarrassed most other nationalists and Communists. To unite the delicacy of his best lyrics with the violence of his attempts at propaganda has been a central undertaking of his life. "The goal is Beauty" but the only road that leads to it lies through the "cruelty" of Lenin—a cruelty, indeed, that is greater than any Lenin ever imagined, the cold cruelty of the æsthete intent on perfection. It is this duality that has made him the greatest of Communist poets. He does not indulge in the lachrymose humanism of Neruda any more than in the rowdy optimism of Mayakowsky. He has no time for the proletariat, "innumerable meat without minds." To many he will seem to show Communism at its worst, but for all of us he shows it at its truest—a merciless arrogance of the human intellect preparing to build the *perfect* society with barrowloads of corpses. "*What maitters 't wha we kill? . . .*"

His first major attempt at this grotesque synthesis was published in 1926 under the title of *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*. It could be argued that this "gallimaufry" is the greatest of all Scots poems. It was assembled by the author, in conjunction with his friend, George Francis Scott, from an assortment of fragments in various metres and stanzaic forms. Connecting passages were added whenever it was absolutely necessary. This example became the type for MacDiarmid's method of composition. Much of his best work has never got beyond the stage of being "excerpts from a long unfinished poem." That a sustained æsthetic unity can be achieved by such methods may well seem astonishing. The poet himself has referred to

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one of these attempts as "a sort of anti-poetry" that "gaes a' airts and nane." Yet the *Drunk Man* itself does possess unity. The thistle and moonlight, the rose and Christianity, whisky and lust, Good and Evil, whirl in their pairs or are isolated singly, as the partners in an eightsome reel meet or are separated by their energetic convolutions. The pattern changes continually, yet it is never wholly lost. For these are the eight main symbols of the *Drunk Man* and MacDiarmid returns to them repeatedly, discovering new opportunities on every occasion for reaching through to a different truth, a revolutionary combination. And each discovery is expressed with the fanatical concision of direct revelation. Such a fluidity of form is common in Scottish literature. The lyrics in *The Jolly Beggars* are connected by descriptive passages as those in the *Drunk Man* by philosophic ones. *Don Juan* too, with its virtuoso digressions from a semblance of narrative, exhibits the same asymmetry and, in doing so, fulfils Byron's claim to being "half a Scot by birth, and bred / A whole one." It is found in Urquhart, Sir David Lyndesay, and in the Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedy. It is the æsthetic element in the jumble of absurdities that MacDiarmid has subsumed under the term (borrowed from Urquhart and having the root meaning of asymmetry) Caledonian Antisyzygy.

The expression is clumsy. It is meant to be so. The Scots flair for pedantry is thus made implicit. These large words can be applied to scenery, the ragged useless gigantic rockscapes of the Highlands, and the almost unnatural contrast between them and the smooth smog-ridden Lowlands. The Caledonian Antisyzygy is illustrated in every branch of Scottish culture and in every phase of character. Violent, sentimental, learned, unimaginative, hyper-sensitive, the mythical Scotsman lives in a mythical Scotland, enjoying a schizophrenic isolation from his actual counterpart and the modern nation.

This mythological Scotland has as much historical documentation to its credit as most myths. "The Scottish nation, being from the beginning always free, hath created kings upon these conditions, that the government entrusted to them by the people's suffrages might be also (if the matter required) removed by the same suffrages." So George Buchanan, one of the greatest Latinists of the Renaissance, in the early 16th century. And it is certainly doubtful whether the Scots would have accepted an English king with the same grumbling timidity as the English extended to James VI of Scotland. It is a historical fact that they did not so accept the Hanoverian accession.

An intransigent people: a free people, sometimes militantly rebellious. The myth has a basis. In all Scottish institutions there is some hint of it; law, religion, education, all support the myth. But only the last is relevant to our purpose. Even now the Scottish University tries to keep its gates open to any intelligent aspirant and to furnish him with an understanding of the methods of study rather than to fob him off with a parcel of lecture notes. More important still are the elementary and secondary schools. These have existed for the past five hundred years though they are now in danger of losing their identity. It is to these schools that the distinctively popular character of Scottish literature is due. Henryson taught in one and Burns learned in another. Whereas most English and French writers belong to an upper middle-class background, the Scots can produce poets and dramatists at every social level, and have been able to do so for some centuries. Aristocrats like Lyndesay and Urquhart, plebeians like Davidson and Hogg, they were all taught to write in these country schoolrooms and they were taught together, with very little favour given to social position. Scots poetry is therefore popular, either in the sense of the Ballads or in the way of a Court literature which is much more truly popular than the current European régime of literature for the *literati*. It possesses usually a set of values that is socially valid as well as æsthetically. It is concerned with entertaining everyone or influencing everyone in a complex and various society, and to do so it must admit a non-literary dictation of literary forms.

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SUCH a socially effective idiom is what MacDiarmid has always been looking for. He is thus related analogically, rather than linealogically, to earlier Scots poetry. The Border Ballads set out to inspire a bundle of cattle thieves to the hazards of a life of murder, robbery, and rape. The complex sonorities of Dunbar, on the other hand, were addressed to the king and his contingent noblemen. Hence the difference between these two types of verse. MacDiarmid's public is of another kind altogether. His purpose lies with "the wisest and learnedest of mankind, who have this one great gift of reason, to answer solidly or to be convinced." The people he wishes to influence are the scientists, administrators, and scholars of his time. In their hands lies the fate of the world and it is their present insensitivity to those diabolical and illogical influences, explicit only in art, that today endangers humanity. He is therefore anxious to persuade them of the finally objective importance of the æsthetic exploration. It would be patently ridiculous for MacDiarmid to try to convince such people in terms of poetry itself. If that could be done, if, at that level, they were sensitive, then Shakespeare and Dante would already have done the job. He therefore tries to attack them on their own ground, using poetry like a guided missile that flies over territories alien to its maker. He tries to demonstrate that there is no field of knowledge which could not be better understood if the irrational, the mystic, and the æsthetic elements were not ignored; and to demonstrate this clearly to specialised workers in each of these fields. A typical example of his attempts to impress such limited but important publics is found in his little poem, *Thalamus*. "Busy as any man in those regions of the brain where consciousness flourishes" (i.e. the frontal lobes) he yet proclaims that he is more interested in those older regions, like the thalamus, which govern our instinctual behaviour. He goes further, and says that these older regions are also evolving, that our emotional as well as our intellectual capacities are increasing and that we have a duty to try to develop all aspects of our psyche in symmetrical proportions:

> *Let fools say science has supplanted poetry:*
> *Rationalism, religion. Even physically*
> *The older parts are holding their own.*
> *The fools are liars to their own anatomy.*

An extension of this method has led MacDiarmid to try to revive the ancient concept of the poet as the universal sage versed in every subject, like an Arabian minstrel or a Celtic bard. The accumulations of two millennia of historical speculation and research are enough to knock the bottom out of any such pretensions and to explode any previous notions of heroic form. Therefore, reasons MacDiarmid, a new form must be made and its first requirement is that it should contain all knowledge. Other formal considerations, even such basic ones as unity and intelligibility, become negligible when set alongside this impossible imperative. He has tried to create a heroic form, primitive, didactic, universal. The heroes are not men, as they were in Homer. Only the fact has the heroic prerogative of victory. It overcomes theories. But these theories, like evolution, psychoanalysis, Marxism, make the facts into mouthpieces by law of the superior organisation in the consciousness. There is thus created a mythology of facts and superfacts similar to the Homeric distinction between men and the supermen whom Homer called gods.

TO HANKER after omniscience is not necessarily to be formless and MacDiarmid's indifference to the ordinary concepts of form has another root. He is writing poetry on the grand scale. Ideologies are part of his epic *personæ*. He is therefore committed to feeling the validity of each conflicting system of beliefs within himself. He must be borne down by the whole weight of whatever truth any faith may have. But MacDiarmid has always been singularly promiscuous in matters of faith. He has espoused simultaneously the causes of Scottish Nationalism, International Communism, and Social credit, while writing, in parenthesis

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and in contradiction to his own conclusions, a poetry that shows a deep understanding of Christianity. He himself regards this ideological virtuosity as one more manifestation of the Caledonian Antisyzygy.

I'll ha'e nae haufway hoose, but aye be whaur
Extremes meet—it's the only way I ken
To dodge the cursed conceit o' bein' richt
That damns the vast majority o' men.

That, from the *Drunk Man*, is his basic definition. Later he writes: "It is a mental counterpart of the Chinese Tin-Tang dichotomy, the peculiar beauty of which is that both parts are regarded as equally necessary, valid and to be accepted—there is no question of *triumphing* over the dark element and wiping it out completely—whereas the Christian doctrine insists more on the *conflict* between opposites than their sustained relationship. This conflict is supposed to be waged to an end, until evil no more remains and Saint George has killed his complementary dragon, at which point the morality play leaves off and we do not know what becomes of the victorious saint, or how he fares in the anomalous situation in which he finds himself now, with no dragon left to do battle with, and, consequently, no reason left for living, whereas the more civilised Chinese have an affection for dragons of all kinds—the profound relationship fraught with beauty and terror, which must nevertheless be entered into."

That he should quote Chinese philosophy in this context may make some readers doubt whether his Antisyzygy is truly Caledonian. But he has often laboured the close connection between Celtic art and that of the East and maintained that Scotland is intellectually closer to Far Eastern countries than to those in Western Europe. The Gael and the Chinaman, that is, can be enlisted together against the cultural axis formed by the Græco-Roman-Christian countries, in which England is one of the senior partners. In some respects he is right. The Scots have never accepted authority, either in society or in religion, with the same placidity as most Europeans. This is particularly true of the Border Scots, where local chiefs acted as independent sovereigns right into the 17th century, and MacDiarmid is a Border Scot. Each man has been master of his own land and his own mind for so long that it would be an unwise king or bishop who would try to filch him of either. When MacDiarmid comes across a countryman who attempts the usual virtues of the Englishman, he denies all blood connection:

Nae doot they're sober, as a Scot ne'er was,
Each tethered to a punctual-snorin' missus,
Whilst I, puir fule, owre continents unkent
And wine-dark oceans wander like Ulysses.

For himself, he may have no land but he will keep a mind of his own and continue to exhort each of his neighbours to stick independently to what his whole conscious intelligence tells him is true. No matter how vehemently he may disagree with Puritanism, he has a Calvinistically violent love for contradictory truths. "Truth" here is a better word than "ideology," though I do not mean to imply anything that can be tabulated by its functions or proved by experiment. It is rather our *decision* to accept the evidence of such tables or demonstrations that is meant. Anything that can be proved is not a truth in this sense because the truth lies in our awareness of it; and that we can never prove: that is what we are. We cannot get outside it in order to establish its validity. We are, each of us, imprisoned in this kind of truth. That is why this kind of truth is more assimilable into the symbolism of geology than that of botany. We look at one another's prisons and call them ideologies so that we can assess them historically; or we label them "character" and watch their social effects. There is a great variety of such ideologies and characters to be found on the Scottish scene; perhaps no more than elsewhere; but in Scotland each takes itself so seriously that it refuses to exercise the tact, the *politesse*, that is always found in great Imperial peoples like the Romans and the English. "Each man in the name of his God," the Scots people advance savagely against one another,

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every man of them determined to purify the world and cast out the alien idols. Each man has his own orthodoxy, his own intellectual armament and moral rearmament, and the devil is expected, quite literally, "to tak the hinmaist."

No hating by request but by oneself—vital images thrown in our way by life,
Grim selection of ideas and feelings, harsh opinions, intolerance, frankness—all
The red roaring life of Burns, Fergusson, old Scotland generally,
Hypocrites have whitewashed, emasculating us under their thrall.

THE spiritual dogmatist is thus confronted by ten thousand heresies, but for the poet they are so many truths and the unique absurdity of the situation increases that number to ten thousand and one. I say "for the poet" because the poet's method of expression is a technique for discovering these truths at the point of their appearance within himself, before they have had time to fossilise into ideologies: he can express them when they are no more than a particular movement of his blood, before they have reached the stage where he can decide whether or not to believe in them.

It was a plethora of such truths, instinct within himself, that MacDiarmid uncovered, revelation by revelation, in the eight main symbols of the *Drunk Man*. It is because they were each emotively present within him and each could be arrived at only after the other had been realised that his poem has the perfectly organic quality of an evolutionary sequence in biology. No matter how accidental his sudden transitions from one mood to another may seem when they are observed in isolation, they are, like genetic mutations, regulated by the fact that any accident other than the one which happened would have led to a very different result and, probably, to a dead end. The total pattern thus acquires the aspect of inevitability which makes it, for those who understand its language, a very readable and satisfying poem.

About the language of MacDiarmid's early lyrics, the *Drunk Man*, and a few of his later poems, too much has already been written. It should be enough here to say that it is a very beautiful language, handled with consummate artistry. Its notorious difficulty reflects the stupidity of its critics rather than the intentions of its creator. It is much easier to read than the Cantos of Ezra Pound and passages of *Ulysses* are linguistically less accessible. Philologically it is a synthesis of most of the spoken Scots dialects with a few odd words thrown in from the obsolete sections of the vocabulary of the Medieval Makars. Its defenders, including MacDiarmid, have magnified its differences from modern English in an attempt to identify it with the nationalist movement in Scottish politics. No such political entanglements are necessary to justify it. MacDiarmid had good reasons of a purely æsthetic kind for trying to rejuvenate English and his attempt was far from being an isolated experiment. Eliot, Pound, Joyce, they were all overcoming the apathetic vacuity in which the *fin de siècle* poets like Dowson and Johnson had left their native tongue. Even Kipling and Newbolt had reverted to colloquialisms in an attempt to bring this vague poetic diction down to earth. MacDiarmid's Scots is by no means so revolutionary as the English manner of his later years. In his first book, he had written: "He was now quite certain that the imagination had some way of dealing with the truth, which the reason had not, and that the commandments delivered when the body is still and the reason silent are the most binding that the souls of men can ever know. So far so good! But this left for his journalistic mind the more difficult problem of communicability." He solved that problem in the same way as many other young men have solved it, by returning to his childhood language and taking his imagination with him.

But, in recent years, he has set himself the task of writing a "high classical poetry," "poems *de longue haleine*—far too long to be practicable in any existing medium,"

A poetry that is—to use the terms of Red Dog—
High, low, jack and the goddam game.

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And for such poetry the language of childhood is insufficient. He needs:

A language like the magnetic needle,
The most sensitive thing in the world,
which responds alike
To Polar light in the North, electric currents
Flowing around the equator, the revolutions
Of the earth on its axis, the annual course
Of the earth round the sun, the revolution of the sun itself,
And the mysterious processes in sun spots.

A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle is well over three thousand lines in length.

A brain laid bare,
A nervous system.

There is no way of doing justice to such a poem in these few words. The brain is that of a drunk man who is contemplating a thistle by moonlight. He is too drunk to get up and go home so he is left alone at the mercy of his thoughts, and these thoughts are merciless. The themes are spotlighted by gruesome jokes, or they are suddenly set ablaze in a lyric like the following translation from Blok:

I hae forekent ye! O I hae forekent.
The years forecast your face afore they went.
A licht I canna thole is in the lift.
I bide in silence your slow comin' pace.
The ends o' space are bricht: at last—oh swift!
While terror clings to me—an unkent face.

Ill-faith stirs in me as she comes at last,
The features lang forekent—are unforecast.
O it gangs hard wi' me, I am forespent.
Deid dreams ha'e beaten me and a face unkent
And generations that I thocht unborn,
Hail the strange goddess frae my hert's hert torn!

The thistle becomes a symbol of the human condition.

It is morality, the knowledge o' Guid and Ill,
Fear, shame, pity . . .
The need to wark, the need to think, the need to be,
And a' that twists life into a certain shape
And interferes wi' perfect Liberty.

The moonlight is that Liberty. At one point the ideas of Liberty, Love, and Knowledge are all identified with one another in a remarkably incisive metaphysical image:

The munelicht is my knowledge o' mysel',
Mysel' the thistle in the munelicht seen,
And hauf my shape has fund itsel' in thee
And hauf my knowledge in your piercin' een.

E'en as the munelicht's borrowed frae the sun
I ha'e my knowledge o' mysel' frae thee,
And much that nane but thee can e'er make clear,
Save my licht's frae the sun, is dark to me.

But this love knowledge is two-sided. He talks of women:

Through a' my self respect
They see the truth abject
—Gin you could pierce their blindin' licht
You'd see a fouler sicht.

And so it goes on, every illusion breaking down under the weight of thought that the drunk man imposes on it; until finally, thought itself becomes a casualty.

Juist as man's skeleton has left
Its ancient ape-like shape ahint,
Sae states o' mind in turn gi'e way
To different states, and quickly seem
Impossible to later men,
And Man's mind in its final shape
Or lang'll seem a monkey's spook,
And, strewth, to me the vera thocht
O' Thocht already's fell like that.

In this situation communication becomes impossible except with the "apallin' genius" of Dostoievsky:

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Aye, this is Calvary—to bear
Your Cross wi' in you frae the seed,
And feel it grow by slow degrees
Until it rends your flesh apairt,
And turn, and see your fellow men
In similar case but sufferin' less
Thro' bein' mair wudden frae the stert! . . .

So he continues into the final squalid pessimism:

The wee reliefs we ha'e in booze
Or ween at times in carnal states
May hide frae us but canna cheenge
The silly horrors o' oor fates.

YET MacDiarmid is not a dispiriting poet. His fits of despair are not the results of physical discomfort or purely personal frustration. It is rather the sense of imminent beatitude, of a psychological and social revolution that is just on the point of happening and that is going to bring forth a race of men to whom our "*Heaven is just the blinterin' o' / A snail-trail on their closet wa'.*" But this celestial carrot keeps its tantalising but minute distance. There is thus an inexplicable discrepancy between MacDiarmid's spiritual sense of the significance of life and his accurate observation of its stupidity and pettiness. Around this central contradiction he arranges incongruous armies of his dialectics. "My disposition," he has written, "is toward spiritual issues made inhumanly clear."

A'thing that ony man be's
A mockery o' his soul at last.
The mair it shows 't the better, and
I'd suner be a tramp than king,
Lest in the pride o' place and poo'er
I e'er forgot my waesomeness.
Sae to debauchery and dirt
And to disease and daith I turn,
Sin' otherwise my seemin' worth
'Ud block my view o' what is what,
And blin' me to the irony
O' bein' a grocer 'neth the sun,
A lawyer gin Justice oped her een,
A pedant like an ant promoted,
A parson buttonholin' God
Or ony cratur o' the Earth
Sma'—bookt to John Smith, High Street, Perth,
Or sic like vulgar gaffe o' life
Sub speciem æternitatis—
Nae void can fleg me hauf as much
As bein' mysel' whate'er I am,
Or, waur, bein' onybody else.

After this Scots masterpiece MacDiarmid increasingly identified spiritual issues with political ones. Both his Communism and his Nationalism increased in virulence, and his verse, for a short time, showed a marked tendency to degenerate into scurrilous epigrams without grace or gaiety. His next book, *To Circumjack Cencrastus*, contained an excellent translation from the German of Rilke and a few fine poems, written in a Scots considerably less dense than any in the earlier books. This was to mark the beginning of a trend back into English, a trend that he is in the habit of reversing with such demonstrations in virtuoso Lallans as *Water Music* and parts of the *Ode for All Rebels*.

With the publication of the *First Hymn to Lenin* he emerged as a fully committed Communist poet. This was in 1931, and, in talking of the leftish poets of the thirties, John Lehmann has referred to this book as "the prelude to the whole movement." In this assessment Mr. Lehmann is mistaken. MacDiarmid was, from the beginning, a very different kind of Communist from his English juniors. In 1933 he wrote: "Some of our younger poets—Spender, Auden, Day Lewis—are Communists, I am told. We will see what we will see. I have seen nothing so far germane to my present concern (i.e. socialist poetry). Ezra Pound's passages in defence of Douglasism are another matter, a solitary exception."

MacDiarmid's Communism, like Pound's Fascism, had an æsthetic basis. Lenin is comparable to Rilke in the intensity, integrity, and understanding with which he pursues an entirely different end. But no. The ends are not so very different. They are both making things, the one a poem and the other a social system. What matters is that both the state

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and the poem should be well made, an intricate organisation delicately balanced. MacDiarmid carries it further than this. Not only the chiefs of state, the Lenins of the world, create a society. Every member must be a creator and must suffer the creative agony.

A line, a word,—and emptiness again!
The impotent desire to ken aince mair
The shinin' presence, and the bitter sense
O' bein' unjustly treated, wi' despair
Cryin' "better than see and tine no' see ava'
Like maist men"—ah!

. . . . . .

Be this the measure o' oor will to bring
Like cruelty to a' men—nocht else'll dae;
The source o' inspiration drooned in bluid
If need be, owre and owre, until its ray
Strengthens in a' forever or's hailly gane
As noo in an antrin brain.

It is not out of simple sadism that the poet wishes to inflict his own pain on the uncreative millions but because he wants them to share the painful experience of growing up into adult human beings aware of their ultimate limitations.

A man never faced wi' death kens nocht o' life.
But a' men are? But micht as well no' be!
The ancient memory is alive to few
And fewer when it is ken what they see,
But them that dae fear neither life nor death,
Mindin' them baith.

His Communism is not a simple matter of more pay for the workers and more jobs for the boys, but a genuine ascetic religion. By forcing society to organise itself more efficiently, much energy that is at present wasted could be diverted to the one task that is truly human, that of understanding, to the point of despair and beyond it, the actual extent of what is understandable and thus to a sophisticated acceptance of those mysteries which cannot be understood. Such an attitude towards Communism could hardly have been more acceptable to Comrade Stalin than Pound's opinions to Herr Hitler.

In 1934 MacDiarmid published *Stony Limits*, the first book in which he establishes those types of versification (that lack of versification) and the concatenation of antagonistic ideas which are his most original and far-reaching contribution to English—as opposed to Scottish—poetry. Here we find the lines larded with learned allusions, interpenetrated by a terrifying stoicism, rich with surface mines of the blackest hatred, categorical, polysyllabic, aphoristic lines following one another in ungrammatical abundance. It is a very beautiful, noble, and well-balanced book. The title poem is dedicated to Charles Doughty but I should prefer to consider another and, to my mind, better poem in which Doughty's influence is perhaps still more omnipresent. It is called *On a Raised Beach* and it begins:

All is lithogenesis—or lochia,
Carpolite fruit of the forbidden tree,
Stones blacker than any in the Caaba,
Cream-coloured caen-stone, chatoyant pieces,
Celadon and corbeau, bistre and beige,
Glaucous, hoar, enfouldered, cyathiform,
Making mere faculæ of the sun and moon,
I study you glout and gloss, but have
No cadran to adjust you with, and turn again
From optik to haptik and like a blind man run
My fingers over you, arris by arris, burr by burr,
Slickensides, truité, rugas, foveoles,
Bringing my æsthesis in vain to bear,
An angle titch to all your corrugations and coigns,
Hatched foraminous cavo-rilieva of a world,
Diectic, fiducial stones. Chiliad by chiliad,
What bricole piled you here, stupendous cairn?
What artist poses the earth écorché thus
Pillar of creation engouled in me?
What eburnation augments you with men's bones,
Every energumen an Endymion yet?
All other stones are in this one's haecity it seems,

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But where is the Christophanic stone that moved?
What Cabirian song from this catasta comes?

Whatever the reader may have made of this *hapax legomenon* of an opening, he cannot fail to realise that this is going to be a poem about stones; and that stones are as different from mankind as the vocabulary in which they are addressed differs from the speech of the average educated Englishman. This vocabulary is drawn from a dozen different specialised disciplines — geology, crystallography, neural physiology, history, art, architecture, even the theology of Duns Scotus. Each word brings with it the peculiar "haecceity" of the subject to which it belongs so that the whole conscious mind is attacked simultaneously from a dozen different directions, and, since very few men can be expected to understand every word at first sight, the unconscious too will be called in to fill gaps. After having startled his reader into so many types of awareness, MacDiarmid goes on to compare the nervous impermanence of the human mind to the self-sufficiency of his raised beach. It, and all other geological strata, outlast the stone constructions that men may make. The strata may indeed change, their constituent particles transported, but in the end:

There are plenty of ruined buildings in the world but no ruined stones.

The geological permanence of stones is seen as the result, the reward almost, of their placid acceptance of their fate. They accept silence with the same joyous indifference as a bird accepts its song—though, of the two, silence is undoubtedly the better song. The ambitious yearnings of humanity after immortality are contrasted to the humble stones with their more nearly immortal lifetimes.

Impatience is a poor qualification for immortality.
Hot blood is of no use in dealing with eternity.
It is seldom that promises or even realisations
Can sustain a clear and searching gaze.
But an emotion chilled is an emotion controlled;
This is the road to certainty,
Reasoned planning for the time when reason no longer avails.

This then is the reason that the man who understands death can also accept life. This is the end result of a disposition "toward spiritual issues made inhumanly clear." Politics and mysticism converge on this one statement, this command to have a kind of hopeless faith that anticipates Eliot's where: "The love and the hope and the faith are all in the waiting." Yet MacDiarmid is never quite so "thoroughly dry and small" as Eliot. He contemplates the stones again and is forced to exclaim:

This is no heap of broken images.
Let men find the faith that builds mountains
Before they seek the faith that moves them.

By the exercise of such faith they will be able to live in spiritual independence of one another, each creating his own life's work, his own mountain, careless of what any other man might think of it.

Great work cannot be combined with surrender to the crowd.
—Nay, the truth we seek is as free
From all yet thought as a stone from humanity.

Yet this truth is not a hidden truth, an underground stream that squeezes a few occasional drops of its sanctifying liquors through a fissure in the rocks. Our difficulty in approaching it is the product of our fear.

Truth is not crushed;
It crushes, gorgonises all else into itself.

The truth is in the rock itself.
Do not argue with me. Argue with these stones.

But you will lose the argument, for the stones, like the poet, keep "a mind as open as the grave."

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"Ah!" you say, "If only these stones would move
—Were it only an inch—of its own accord.
This is the resurrection we await,
—The stone rolled away from the tomb of the Lord.
I know there is no weight in infinite time,
Nor impermeability in infinite space. . . ."

Here, at last, is "the Christophanic stone that moved." Its existence is a sign of the ultimate infinity of human nature. Surrounded by the love of Christ the stone is cut off from the laws of its own kind as it would be in an infinite space-time continuum where no gravitational forces were operative. This brilliant image for the love of God does not impress the man who devised it. He looks again at the stones, and denies the miracle:

Detached intellectuals, not one stone will move,
Not the least of them, not a fraction of an inch.

The Christian myth is mere myth. And then the poem ends in a final incandescence of polysyllables.

IN SPITE of this fanatical stoicism, MacDiarmid's autobiography, *Lucky Poet*, is a hastily built haystack of verbiage chiefly concerned with complaints about his bad luck and full of attacks on the human categories (literary men, Englishmen, Scotsmen, non-literary men, etc.) he regards as responsible for it. Yet, although it is often infantile and usually ungrammatical, it is a magnificent book, its frequent vulgarities somehow subordinated to a complex myth that can be recognised more easily than it can be identified.

—And all this here, everything I write, of course
Is an extended metaphor for something I never mention.

This "something I never mention" is the same as Wittgenstein's experiences, "whereof one cannot speak." It explains why the word "silence" is central to MacDiarmid's conception of poetry, why the *Drunk Man* ended with that silence:

. . . whom nocht in man or Diety,
Or Daith or Dreid or Laneliness can touch,
Wha's deed owre often and has seen owre much,

and why at a critical point in his latest poem, *In Memoriam, James Joyce*, he writes:

. . . Hölderlin sought,
And often miraculously found,
The word with which silence speaks
Its own silence without breaking it.

It is because such silence is omnipresent, cradled within and stretching beyond all his ranting, his exhibitionism, his passion for facts, that MacDiarmid is a poet: but it is because so many of the "silly horrors o' oor fates" are brought into contact with this healing and justifying silence that he is a great poet.

Stony Limits is the transitional book. From then on MacDiarmid's ideas, though remaining in antagonism, become increasingly systematic, while his verse forms loosen. There is no attempt, in most of his recent poetry, to construct verse in any ordinary sense of the term. Long prose passages, transcribed from the work of writers like Martin Buber and Leo Shestov, are liberally inserted. The division of these passages into lines serves as an additional, and very flexible, method of punctuation, altering the emphasis of the original to suit the requirements of the poet. This seems, to me at least, to be a perfectly justifiable device, and when it is supported, as it sometimes is, by a subtle ear for strange and forceful rhythms, it can lead to poetry every bit as delicate as the more pretentiously complex stanzaic forms of most modern verse.

MacDiarmid's fundamental forms are not, however, stanzaic. They are dictated by the sequence of ideas. All kinds of ideologies are used and a variety of facts is subsumed under each of them. These ideologies are inter-

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connected, often by simple apposition as two geological strata of very different periods may be found to outcrop side by side in the landscape. Administrative decentralisation is thus compared to the division of a diseased personal psyche under analysis and is regarded as having the same liberating effect. Each theory, the social and the psychological, is a metaphor for the other.

But MacDiarmid is a practical poet, a propagandist at the spiritual level, and for this a nexus of practical propositions is necessary. Like most of us he considers that the world is in a very bad way and likely to destroy itself: but, unlike the majority of his own Communist friends even, he has no complete faith in any partial or political solutions. It is his reiterated belief that a psychological revolution is necessary if mankind is not to commit suicide. He goes further and states his conviction that such a revolution is already taking place: "A new mutation is occurring in the 'soul' of man, as a result of which his consciousness will be so enlarged as to be capable of conceiving and pursuing new ends commensurate with his technical mastery of means." Such a change has already been envisaged by Gerald Heard in *The Ascent of Humanity*: "Man's own self-consciousness alone decides whether he will mutate and the mutation is instantaneous; as a result of this mutation the barrier between consciousness and the unconscious will disappear, we shall consciously realise our oneness with life as a whole with which the unconscious is already continuous, though the fact is at present hidden from us, and our enlarged consciousness will give us direct insight into the nature of reality." It is obvious that this cannot be effected by any mere improvement in the techniques of scientific verification or any increase in their scope. Such a linking of conscious and unconscious knowledge is to be found only in the "artist's diseased nervous system." "Just as man the Pagan concentrated upon the truth or sureness of his foot and man the Christian upon the virtue or strength of his arm, so it has been left to modern man to develop that beautiful precision of the eye, that instinct for the right thing which is the property of the artistic genius rather than of thought or moral character." It is the artist alone who can throw a rope to the unconscious wisdom of the individual and the race, and thus begin to bridge our unconscious repressions. This leads to the metaphysics of Shestov. "The whole art of philosophy should be directed towards freeing us from the 'good and evil' of cooks and carpenters, to find that frontier beyond which the might of general ideas ceases." And the same goes for "good and bad" in art. General ideas of form are no help. The aggressive "formlessness" of his poetry has, therefore, a formal significance.

. . . Beyond the four dimensions of space-time
There is a fifth dimension, individuality,
Here empty space as well as the space-time continuum disappear.
The individual discontinuum
Becomes established as the physical principle
Of this world, and the five-dimensional aspect is introduced.
Homogeneity, causality, probability disappear.
In a universe without emptiness events do not happen
Because other events happen before.
Within its five dimensions
Forces influence each other elastically.
There is no logic,
No determinate sequence,
Only tendencies.

A poem is a "tendency" toward verbal form. Instead of facetious verbal ambiguity MacDiarmid tries to reach through to "the ageless ambiguity of things" and refuses to reject any one truth because its linguistic opposite is also a truth.

TO TRY to classify him, to make an estimate of his stature, to nibble away his pointless eccentricities and decide what there is of lasting value in his work, would be a job for a hero who was also a sage. In Scots he has been generally accepted as forming one of the triumvirate, Dunbar-Burns-

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MacDiarmid, which rules over poetry. Neither of the others was of comparable intellectual stature and his technical mastery of many verse forms is as complete as theirs. Yet there is a lack of warmth in most of his poetry, a lack of those simple irrational sympathies known as love and charity. His emotions seem to follow an intellectual party line so that, when he says he loves, he has always such good reasons for doing so that one feels he is more in love with his train of thought than with any chance object that might get in its way. The curses of Dunbar have a touch of camaraderie and joy: those of MacDiarmid are pure hate, like Hitler's. The social exuberance of Burns is always tinged with respect and gratitude, no matter how scathingly comic he may be: MacDiarmid, equally exuberant, can never overcome his contempt—for it is essentially a self-contempt.

His English, as well as his Scots poems, express the spiritual austerity of a man who refuses to give vent to his kinder impulses, but they are still more difficult to judge since they have never been published in their final form. Immense chunks occasionally appear but they are only fragments, ragged as shrapnel, of a much larger poem that has not yet got into print. Much of his earlier work is no longer available so that it would seem high time that a *Collected Poems* was produced. His work needs to be read in mass, as it does not depend for its effect on a happy coincidence of phrases but upon the "speculative stamina" with which he blazes new trails of thought. His faults are almost as great as his virtues. Few men have ever written so badly as MacDiarmid at his worst, but fewer still have equalled him at his best. But his is a new kind of poetry. (That is why it is possible to deny that it is poetry at all.) And the world is not so rich in new things that it can afford to dispense with

A poetry like the barrel of a gun
Weaving like a snake's head.

A poetry that can put all its chips on the table
And back it to the limit.
A poetry full of the crazy feeling
That everything that has ever gone into my life
Has pointed to each successive word
And I couldn't have failed to write it if I'd tried.

. . . . . .

A poetry at the worst adept
In the artful tessellation of commonplaces
Expressed with so exact a magnificence
That they seem—and sometimes are—profound.

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Cézanne and His Critics

IN 1900 Maurice Denis painted a large picture entitled *Hommage à Cézanne*. Cued by Fantin-Latour's group portrait *Hommage à Delacroix*, Denis assembled a group of artists and intellectuals round an easel on which was a work by Cézanne. It was a gesture of "artistic sympathy" which Cézanne appreciated. His admirers, reading from left to right, are Odilon Redon, Paul Sérusier, Vuillard, Melleriau, Ambroise Vollard, Denis, Ranson, K-X. Roussel, Bonnard, and Mme Denis. The picture on the easel, the painting in the painting, is a still life which had belonged to Paul Gauguin, a provenance which gave additional lustre to the work. This picture is important in Cézanne criticism because it was later chosen by Roger Fry as the centre of his study of Cézanne. Denis painted himself apparently lecturing on the still life: at any rate, his hands partly obscure it, a detail symptomatic of the whole of Cézanne criticism.

In style the *Hommage* is predominantly flat and decorative. And it is as a flat and decorative painter that Cézanne himself was characterised by Denis in a magazine article of 1907, the year after Cézanne's death. He divided the public into "those who love painting and those who prefer to painting itself the literary and other interests accessory to it." Then, after hanging certain works by Cézanne in an imaginary provincial museum he affirms that "Cézanne's canvas is truly a picture." He supports this pattern by quoting another symbolist painter, Sérusier, for whom Cézanne is "the pure painter. His style is a pure style; his poetry is a painter's poetry. The purpose, even the concept of the object represented, disappears before the charm of his coloured forms." The symbolist-Cézanne's apple is too decorative to eat. Instead you are made to say: "How beautiful! One would not peel it; one would like to copy it."

Of the young admirers of Cézanne at the end of his life, Emile Bernard is the most important. His account, though not the only one, is the one that has been most influential on later criticism. He is the channel for some of Cézanne's most familiar statements, such as "I am the primitive of a new art." Apart from his reports, Bernard was a full-time recipient of artist's letters. It was to him that Cézanne wrote on April 15th, 1904: "Treat nature by the cylinder, the sphere, and the cone, everything in proper perspective so that each side of an object or a plane is directed towards a central point." These words, first published in 1907, have had an incredible resonance. They have been quoted and sometimes misquoted to justify both cubism and classicism. But these clichés have, in fact, no relation to Cézanne's practice, though critics have tried to square the document and the works of art. The geometrisation of appearances—which makes egg-heads of us all—is merely an aid to realisation taught in academies and art schools. Certainly Cézanne never, as Meier-Graefe thought, "sat there and looked for the cone."

Why did Cézanne explain an art that was radical and experimental, which broke definitively with traditional converging perspective, in terms that belong to an academic tradition? Possibly it was a precaution, similar to his remaining in the Roman Catholic Church and, as he put it, leaning on Rome. Or, it may be a semantic failure: he would not be the first or the last person to fail to verbalise his thoughts correctly. In part it is

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likely to have been the effect of a feedback from his correspondent who had markedly conservative tastes. In a letter to his son Cézanne described Bernard as "an intellectual crushed by the memory of the museums." Bernard, with his desire for a revived Grand Manner, was not the correspondent likely to ask the right questions of the difficult old man Cézanne was at the end of his life.

AMBROISE VOLLARD, the dealer who gave Cézanne his first one-man show in 1895, wrote a book of personal reminiscences which, when it appeared in Paris in 1914, was the fullest account of the artist available. Vollard is chiefly valuable as a witness but his first-hand evidence is subject to retrospective ordering. Vollard's book is, in a sense, the reverse of Zola's *L'Œuvre*, which is partly based on Cézanne's character. When reading the novel we are continually curious about the "real" Cézanne behind the fictional Claude Lantier. Reading Vollard we are curious about the fictions which inform the supposedly real biography. In both cases it is the mythology of *the* artist, rather than the individuality of a particular artist, which emerges. Vollard's Cézanne alternates between tirades and a lump in the throat, between an artist's sense of inhuman glory and endearing *gaucherie*. His environment is a Provence full of caricatured peasants and a Paris shared by Officialdom and struggling artists.

A more informative personal book is Joachim Gasquet's *Cézanne* (1919). Despite heavy patches of French literary style, Gasquet, a close friend of the artist, has flashes of insight and information about Cézanne. The important section of his book, "What He Said To Me," is the origin of the story of Cézanne's gesture with his hands:

> Cézanne: I've got my motif. . . . (He joins his hands.) A motif, you see, like this. . . .
>
> Me: How?
>
> Cézanne: Oh, yes. . . . (He repeats his gesture, parts his hands, the ten fingers open, he brings them together slowly, slowly, then they join, they grip, they clench, they interlace.) That's what you must achieve. If I aim too high or too low, all is lost. There mustn't be a single link too loose; there mustn't be a hole where feeling, light, or truth can escape. I bring on—you begin to understand—my canvas all at once, altogether. I bring together with the same spirit, with the same faith, all that's scattered about. . . . All that we see disperses, disappears, doesn't it. . . .

And, though slanted towards decadence in Gasquet's telling, Cézanne's appreciation of Tintoretto reveals a side of his character neglected until lately:

> Cézanne: I have leafed through all that I could find of his work. It is gigantic. Everything is there from a still life to God. It is a Noah's Ark. All the forms of existence, and with an incredible pathos, passion, and invention. If I were to go to Venice, it would be for him. . . . I remember, in a Temptation of Christ, in San Rocco, I believe, an angel with full breasts, with bracelets, a pederastic demon who offers the stones of Jesus—with a lesbian concupiscence. Nobody's ever painted anything more perverse. . . .

Julius Meier-Graefe, anxious to honour the artist with a larger frame of reference than the French thought necessary, presented us with a cyclopic Cézanne (Munich, 1922). His man is a Germanic Latin, "who perceived with such intensity the Northern elements of the race which had given birth to Gothic art." "What was Gothic in his nature was the ruthless subjection of the material of his spirit, the aspiration to infinity." Comparing this to Vollard the reader may feel that you might as well fall flat on your face as lean over too far backwards. However, Meier-Graefe's professional Northernness enabled him to appreciate, with a fullness rare at the time, Cézanne's early work. While most critics were looking for the classic point of Cézanne's form, the moment of synthesis and equilibrium, he explored with a sombre voluptuous relish the "black idylls." His insight included the organisation of colour as well as the turbulent erotism of the early period. And when he described, writing of a still life, "a perfectly simple white tablecloth which falls down in straight folds and might cover tombs" the image seems to come from an accurate response to a part of Cézanne's personality.

Juan Gris, in a letter of 1919, wrote of his fellow painters: "They all swear by Courbet. As for Delacroix, Cézanne, Ingres, Renoir—all filth." In the same year, stifled by Denis's decorative Cézanne, Bernard's academic Cézanne, Vollard's clown, and the rest, dadaist Francis Picabia wrote this poem:

> I have a horror of the painting
> of Cézanne
> it bores me stiff.

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In 1927 Roger Fry published *Cézanne: a study of his development.* Significantly, this is the year in which Roberto Longhi published his *Piero della Francesca* in Italy. Longhi interpreted Piero in a way coloured by late-cubist geometrics, as a *quattrocento* Juan Gris. The position of the author is similar to Fry's in *Cézanne*: both men stress ellipses, spherical volumes, and horizontal planes (as well as hats and apples) as formal play. Fry believed that Monet's impressionism represented a naturalistic anarchy in which coherent design had been lost. Paradoxically, therefore, post-impressionists like Cézanne and Seurat, who stressed form and design, were not only historically more modern than the impressionists; they were also æsthetically more traditional. "I had to admit to myself," Fry wrote, "how much nearer Cézanne was to Poussin than to the *Salon d'Automne.*" He is presented as an artist who recreated classicism "as a new and potent reality."

To prove his contention that Cézanne saw through "the weft of colour sensations which nature spreads" to the "profounder and less evident realities" of "architecture and logic," Fry attended closely to the still-life paintings, a *genre* he particularly valued. "It is in the still-life that we frequently catch the purest self-revelation of the artist. In any other subject humanity intervenes." The picture he chose to be the test case of "disinterested" contemplation is a rather glamorous work with special associations, the still-life that had belonged to Gauguin. This is *Le Compotier*, painted ca. 1877, no. 341 in Lionello Venturi's *catalogue raisonné.* It depicts a table on which is a compotier holding grapes and apples, a half-filled wine glass, a knife, and more apples on a roughly folded cloth. Fry attributes to Cézanne "a constant tendency towards the mo- -mple and logical relations. Here that -plicity becomes fully evident. One has the impression that each of these objects is infallibly in place, and that its place was ordained for it from the beginnings of all things, so majestically and serenely does it repose there."

As is well known, the artist drew ovals as "oblongs with rounded ends." Rightly, Fry dismissed ignorant accusations of clumsiness to explain the device by saying that an oval "harmonises ill with the circle and the right line." Thus, Cézanne ovals represent adjustments necessitated by a total harmony of primary spheres and rectangles. "One divines, in fact, that the forms are held together by some strict harmonic principle almost like that of the canon in Greek architecture."

Fry's interpretation is invalidated by his failure to allow for the complexity of the organisation of space in the paintings. The late 19th century recognition of the problem of reconciling the artificial flatness of a painting with the representation of space is ignored. A true ellipse touches the plane of a picture at one point only: a horizontal oblong with rounded ends hugs the surface of the picture for as long as its descriptive function permits. The objects in *Le Compotier* co-exist as flat forms on the surface of the picture and as modelled forms in space. Fry ignores this ambiguity of space and surface, precisely because it is ambiguous. He noticed the artist's tendency to place objects parallel to the picture plane, but insisted on seeing this as Poussinesque recession in depth, like a vista of gravestones.

In the foreground of *Le Compotier* a sharp vertical shadow is cast by the table-drawer. Fry candidly admitted himself unable to account for it. It occurs in a vertical sequence that includes part of the tablecloth, an apple, the support of the compotier, and the highest-placed apple in the design: individually each form is solid enough, but their vertical continuity implies flatness. This Fry could not see.

Fry has a place for Cézanne's early work in his narrow scheme, but only because he has a powerful precedent in mind. He can sympathise with the "dark idylls" because he saw an analogy with Poussin's Venetian period, which was more erotic than his later Roman period. The psychological idea that repression is essential to maturity becomes, in Fry's words, "the *complete* suppression of the subjective expression" to make mature classicism possible (my italics). Thus the attainment of ideal form is made dependent on the maturity of the artist. In the attempt to *refaire Poussin sur Cézanne*, violence and ambiguity are things to be overcome with the aid of a little classical therapy.

Following Fry, Clive Bell, in *An Account of French Painting* (London, 1930), defined French art as "realistic and reasonable" and went on to characterise Cézanne, Seurat, Gauguin, and Van Gogh, taken together, "as the last chapter of Impressionism or the first

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of a new Classicism" (an idea expounded in France by Robert Rey in *La Renaissance du Sentiment Classique*, 1931). The neo-classicism into which Cézanne was pressed was part of the *mystique* of things French, characteristic of much late 19th century and early 20th century criticism. R. H. Wilenski in *French Painting* (1931) revealed a similar attitude when he found "an aspect of the French spirit which is deeply rooted in the permanent simplicities of life," common to the Le Nains, Chardin, and Cézanne. On the other hand, the latter is (with Seurat) at the head of "the Cubist-Classical Renaissance." All Wilenski can see in the multiple viewpoint of cubism (which broke up the integrity of objects) is a means of creating essential Form at the expense of mere individual forms. In this way Cézanne is arbitrarily placed by formalist critics in a tradition of lingering classicism.

CÉZANNE's country has been almost as much investigated as his art. To Fry "the sunburnt rocks and the aromatic scrub and ilex groves" of Aix-en-Provence were Virgilian. A quarter of a century later (no time at all to the classicist) Sir Kenneth Clark echoed this, finding in Provence "the eternal harmonies of a classical landscape—of Tuscany and Greece." Dispelling these myths, modern visitors with cameras and telephoto lenses have gone over the ground. Their researches have, in a subtler way than might be supposed, made of classical Provence a fiction.

Photographs of the artist's sites have been taken by Erle Loran, John Rewald, and Venturi. The confrontation of places and paintings, even though the trees have grown and wings have been added to one or two of the houses, reveals Cézanne's artistic process intimately. It is clear that he sticks to each particular view without thinking, as he paints, of cylinders, spheres, and cones. It is clear, too, that each unique spot is radically transformed into something flatter than the original. He paints signs for road and mountain, but the road is flattened and the distant mountain brought near: the resultant flatness is a way of asserting the identity of the picture as an object.

Fritz Novotny's interpretation of Cézanne's space (*Cézanne und das Ende der wissenschaftlichen Perspektive*, Vienna, 1938) is based on a comparison of the paintings with Rewald's photographs. Novotny (*Paul Cézanne*, Vienna, 1937) pointed out that the picture plane has become "an artistic reality." On the other hand, the picture is not merely flat (like Denis's Persian carpet). Cézanne creates "a form of space which despite its depth . . . makes it difficult for the beholder to enter into the spatial construction." You cannot go for walks in Cézanne's Provence. The surface of the painting, which is functional, not hollowed out, as in a Claude, gets in the way. So it can be said that the photographers forced recognition of the autonomy of Cézanne's art by defining more clearly than ever before the process of the act of painting.

This increased sensitivity to the physical process of painting is found in Lionello Venturi's *Cézanne Water Colours* (Oxford, 1943). Although his *catalogue raisonné* (Paris, 1936) failed to bring chronological order to the *œuvre*, his awareness "of the nature of painting as different from that of reality" was acute and timely. "Cézanne found stability in the composition of the water colour and not in the construction of the subject." Interpretation depends on a response to the act of painting as a real gesture rather than on an underlying system of universal forms. In addition, Venturi stressed the "drama, lyricism and romance" of the late works. In this the author is typical of the newer critics who accept the elliptical late and the dramatic early styles as equally important. Most earlier critics got to both extremes of Cézanne's art by working outwards from an imagined still centre in the paintings of the late 1870's and the 80's.

Adrian Stokes, alone in England in the 1930's, appreciated the flatness of Cézanne's composition as a complement to the deep space we had been accustomed to see in European paintings. In *Colour and Form* (1937) he discussed forms in painting that "are integrated with their background plane" and not just "put there." He relates this to his unifying formula of carving. He has a curious list of painters whose colour possesses "inner light," as in "stones used for carving," and whose forms, like the architectural ornament he admires, exist "in a tense communion with the plane that shows them off." Piero, Giorgione, and Chardin make up the list with Cézanne. Stokes's basic notion is

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sound for Cézanne studies, though his attempt to make it all-inclusive is bizarre.

Though fascinated by Longhi-esque geometrics (more dandified than Fry's), Stokes was dissatisfied with the consequent atrophy of content and attempted to enlarge formalistic art criticism by projecting post-Freudian psychoanalysis into the picture. Columns become containers of love instead of essences. Here is no simple subjugation of artistic form to ready-made evaluation but an introspective manœuvre worthy of somebody with seven years' experience of analysis. Stokes prepared a text on Cézanne for a picture book in 1947 but he had his real say in another book of the same year, *Inside Out*. Cézanne is represented as classical but Stokes stretches the term to mean an art without conventions dealing with impersonal fantasies, a hybrid out of Fry and psychoanalysis. Following Melanie Klein, Stokes assumes that the artist destroys the world and, then, remakes it, in his pictures, as a gesture of reparation. This eroticised classicism has had a liberating effect on Cézanne criticism.

Stokes's influence can be seen on Lawrence Gowing's introduction to the catalogue of an exhibition at the Tate Gallery (1954). From Stokes he took not only an involved style but, also, the idea of art as a restitution for destructive fantasies. Cézanne's early style is a "deliberate assault" on nature whereas the mature style "enfolded the visible world in a embrace which was itself a reparation, a lasting re-creation of the object of love." Nature appears as "a symbolic re-creation on an unbroken plane" owing to Cézanne's preservation of "the character of painting as an action in itself." In this way Cézanne asserts the autonomy of art while retaining references to nature.

Gowing defines nature as "a source of nourishment, the source, in fact, of the real material for rebuilding its likeness in an ideal, unshakeable form." His use of the psychological idea about the artist's fantasy of nature seems to be only a way of holding on to traditional theories of the imitation of nature, despite the different significance of the newer ideas. Gowing was trained as a painter in the Euston Road School, where a Cézanne shorn of linearism and Froebel-like geometry was taught. This realist Cézanne haunts Gowing's text. And his statement that "stability is the essence of Cézanne's conception of the picture" introduces a covert classicising note, whereas what is needed is the kind of observation made by Meyer Schapiro in his book on Cézanne (New York, 1952). He points out that Cézanne's perspective never "precedes the act of painting" and that the activity of finding is "a visible part of the painting."

CÉZANNE criticism in post-war France is also anti-classical. There is the influence of André Malraux who, in *Les Voix du Silence*, spread the concept of autonomy over all styles. Art generates art: this, applied to Cézanne, focused attention on the values integral to the work of art itself and not on hypothetical absolutes symbolised by geometry. On the other hand, Malraux's expressionism keeps his idea of art well away from the decorative autonomy of Denis. Since the war the procession of painters who thought that painting on Cézanne's sites was a short cut to his size has culminated in an experiment in identification. First André Masson, then Pierre Tal Coat, and others, have lived and painted at Aix. Masson, who called Mte Ste Victoire the Fujiyama of Occidental painters, described another famous site in these terms: "the Bibémus quarry, which was made by human exploitation (already ancient, now abandoned) and the persistence of the elements of nature, is an ideal combination." The art of the École d'Aix is such a combination, the terms of nature and art being intricately conflated. Masson's effort was to dominate, Tal Coat's to incorporate, the master's style. Both appear very much as Malraux men.

Another influence is that of existentialism which, by stressing the uniqueness of each individual's act, dissolves the ground for precedent and denies the possibility of perfection. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (*Sens et Non-Sens*, Paris, 1948) presented Cézanne's art as something in the making and unfinishable. He describes painting as a manner of existing, the means by which Cézanne sketched the freedom his situation denied him. Authentic existence is incompatible with convention and habit. Cézanne's refusal to consign art either to the status of sign or the status of object was an heroic choice, that had

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to be perpetually renewed. Henri Maldiney (*Les Temps Modernes*, 1949) characterised Tal Coat's brush strokes as provisional and urgent, applied to the canvas as if nothing were settled. Recognition of this perpetual freedom is fundamental to current Cézanne studies.

It is not my only point that Cézanne is complex, though he is. Nor have I a master term that will govern all the ideas of Cézanne listed above. The critic can no longer write according to a great canon, an absolute idea, or if he does he is not safe from the irony of readers outside his peer group. The fault of the influential idea of a classical Cézanne is that it ignored the critic's facts of a time, a place, and an audience. Roger Fry's criticism assumed a constant set of values, a standard which guaranteed security to art and all its users. Art criticism must rest on the declared position of the critic, which is a fact as irreducible as the position of the physicist studying electrons who, by his presence, affects what he is observing. The art critic has no claim to be disinterested or concerned with eternal values. The variety of ideas about Cézanne is offered as evidence of the proposition that art criticism is committed to change not finality, to curiosity not content, to dates not eternity.

There is no dominating figure in Cézanne criticism now, which does no harm. The new tendencies, in no sense systematic, emphasise the uniqueness of each painting and the humanity of the painter. This may not seem much to do, but it is more than the earlier generation, with its organised æsthetic, managed. Of the earlier criticism one aberrant piece of writing, with its recognition that Cézanne's viewpoint was dynamic and multiple, not single, still seems to address post-war readers directly. This is D. H. Lawrence's *Introduction to his* (own) *Paintings* (1929).

But at the same time Cézanne was triumphing with the apple and appleyness he was still fighting with the cliché. When he makes Madame Cézanne most *still*, most appley, he starts making the universe slip uneasily about her. It was part of his desire: to make the human form, the *life* form, come to rest. Not static—on the contrary. Mobile but come to rest. And at the same time he set the unmoving material world into motion. Walls twitch and slide, chairs bend or rear up a little, cloths curl like burning paper. Cézanne did this partly to satisfy his intuitive feeling that nothing is really *statically* at rest—a feeling he seems to have had strongly —as when he watched the lemons shrivel or go mildewed, in his still-life group, which he left lying there so long so that he *could* see that gradual flux of change: and partly to fight the cliché, which says that the inanimate world *is* static and that walls *are* still. In his fight with the cliché he denied that walls are still and chairs are static. In his intuitive self he *felt* for their changes.

And these two activities of his consciousness occupy his later landscapes. In the best landscapes we are fascinated by the mysterious *shiftiness* of the scene under our eyes; it shifts about as we watch it. And we realise, with a sort of transport, how intuitively *true* this is of landscape. It is *not* still. It has its own weird anima, and to our wide-eyed perception it changes like a living animal under our gaze. This is a quality that Cézanne got marvellously.

Lawrence Alloway

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NOTES FROM A DIARY

Kingsley Amis and the Experts

I don't think Kingsley Amis's now famous pamphlet *Socialism and the Intellectuals* has been discussed much as literature. Yet it provides a solution of what is for writers a serious technical problem. How is the non-expert to write about a subject which is the province of specialists, professionals, and bosses?

The failure of the "intellectual" in politics is very largely his inability to solve this problem. Adopting the wrong "tone" he rules himself out of court by showing himself to be precisely, an "intellectual."

Mr. Amis's strategy is fascinating. First of all, he puts his own ignorance to the forefront. Then he writes in a style which is skilfully slovenly. "In fact this essay is a tarted-up version of a talk given to a weekend school, in which my purpose was, if nothing else, to draw as few hear-hears as possible." The epithet "tarted-up," an analytic critic might point out, is by no means ill-chosen. For the moral tone of the essay is that of reluctant, rather warm-hearted, ultimately willing (if economic interest is served) flirtation. To demonstrate this, I must change Mr. Amis's sex for a moment. The argument is that she doesn't really know much about politics, nor does she care about them, perhaps she prefers reading books, though she doesn't think much of the intellectuals either (yet she is a serious girl—reading, as it were between the lines). She also has, somewhere, a heart of gold, and this makes her blood boil when she thinks of conservatives and critics of the Welfare State which has given girls like her a lot of treatment free. What she hates most of all, though, is all this bleedin' 'ypocrisy about "Causes," and all this sense of guilt people go on about. She prefers even the Tories to all that high-falutin talk. Self-interest is what she believes in, self-interest and a warm heart.

The effect of all this is to provoke a dramatic anxiety in the reader, especially, I suppose, if he be a Labour Party Organiser. How, oh how, get Mr. Amis to a meeting? He has only attended one so far, and left it groaning, and he has no desire to "knock at the door of the local Labour Party headquarters." He leaves socialists feeling that they are unattractive. This fascinates them.

Rider to Reader

Since contemporary criticism scarcely considers the dramatic relation of writer to reader, I shall probably be thought to be sneering at Mr. Amis. To do so would be ungrateful, if only because his remarks about the Thirties are the most just I have read by any of his generation. What I am coarsely drawing attention to is that one of the good things about the young writers is their dramatisation of the writer-reader relation. That is really the little bit of good in all the "angry young man" business. Kingsley Amis, John Osborne, and Colin Wilson (who are different in all other respects) do say "I, I, I" all the time, and in doing so, they surely represent more than themselves. With many others, I have wondered what Jimmy Porter is angry about. Perhaps it is simply that he lives in a society where he has to spend so much time insisting on the simple fact that he is unadjustably himself. As Mr. John Osborne puts it, defending Tennessee Williams and himself against what he calls the "adjustment school": "Every character trait is a neurosis writ small. I like my plays writ large, and that is how these are written."

The Young People's Crusade

The four Oxford undergraduates who, after their brief prison spell in Hungary, refused to answer questions adequately at a press conference, because they had already sold the exclusive rights of their stories to certain newspapers, provide confirmation, I suppose, of Mr. Amis's conclusion that "the best and most trustworthy political motive is self-interest." Mr. Philip Toynbee, it seems, may find his crusade of young persons to Hungary, due to take place in March, transgressing the rules of the amateur clubs. Mr. Toynbee is of his own generation in thinking there should be un-self-interested

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motives. I do not recall any undergraduate during the Spanish Civil War making a remark like that of Mr. Christopher Lord to the *News Chronicle* correspondent Boris Kidel: "I'm not mercenary at heart, but I like money. You don't really expect us to say anything for nothing."

Possibly being, or (according to Mr. C. Lord's standards) not being mercenary is justified partly by the current widely-diffused idea that the English are much poorer today than they were twenty years ago. I heard this voiced by Mr. John Wain to an audience at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, when he was chairmanning a somewhat dreary discussion of their predicament by four only mildly angry young men. Mr. Wain said that one great difference between now and the 1930's was that then there was a great deal more money around.

I am no more an economist than Mr. Wain, so I cannot compare the real wealth of England in 1930 with that of today. But I do know how the young felt then and, for the purposes of comparison, there are a few facts that help.

The poor were certainly much poorer in the 1930's. Not only were wages comparatively less, but all workers were overshadowed (as were many members of the middle class) by unemployment.

The general mental picture of the national economy was terrifying—more and more unemployed, more and more dole, less and less exports. There may have been more investments, but they were running out faster, and no-one knew how to stop the slump.

A current idea of young writers today seems to be that a previous generation of their colleagues was, when young, far better off. Even Mr. Amis seems to think that the unreality of the Thirties was connected with the bourgeois prosperity of the young writers then. There is some truth in the idea that the Thirties was "bourgeois" but it ought to be pointed out that Colin Wilson, John Osborne, and also Mr. Kingsley Amis himself have had a commercial success far greater than the oft-cited Auden, Day Lewis, and Spender at a corresponding age. The success of these recent writers, financially speaking, is comparable with the young Noël Coward or Terence Rattigan. Perhaps this sounds envious, but I do not mean it to be. What I mean to insist is that a true picture of our present state of discontent would be a very complicated one, and when one had finished making it one might be left wondering what there was to be discontented about; and then one would have to start all over again because the discontent is palpable. But perhaps the most misleading thing to do is to compare a rosy picture of the past with a miserable one of the present. For to most members of most classes in the past the present would seem preferable to conditions in their time.

The English Non-stop Crisis

I do not mean to question the fact that a great many young men and women today feel frustrated. But I think that they themselves may not know the cause of their frustration.

I think that a hidden cause of complaint might turn out to be that there are and will be no more rentiers. The rentier is a despised creature, and no one would like to put it quite as brazenly as that. Yet I suspect that Mr. Wain in his remark at the I.C.A. was measuring poverty by the decline in national and private investments. Quite simply, being, on a national scale, or privately, rentier, means that there is a place in life for leisure.

Now in the England of universal security and full employment, the one thing everyone is always being told is that he or she must work. If we go on working, there will be ever-expanding markets, and everything will be all right. If we stop working for a moment even, then we will be out of step with ever-expanding world prosperity and will have to pay the price of being a small island of over-populated lazybones. The Englishman lives in a competitive world. All the same, individually, he feels that he does not gain enough from this competition. He has to keep on running, not to get ahead, but in order not to fall back, and to pay for social security.

We are frequently told that the recent great rise in the rate of emigration is due to lack of incentives in England. I wonder whether it is not partly due also to the very success of governments since 1931 in giving a picture of this island engulfed in endless crisis. This is borne out, I think, by the tremendous rise in the number of those who say they want to emigrate since Suez. They have lived for many years now in a country where they are told that, on account of over-population, there is almost no margin between comparative prosperity gained by working to produce exports, and disaster. Then suddenly the Government that has been telling

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them this produces a major disaster through a madly extravagant adventure. It is no wonder that people see mass emigration as the alternative to government that plunges them on a nation-wide scale into the very situation they have been warned against.

Ultimately people emigrate not to discover a paradise of incentives, but to be in some place where they can work out their own salvation without constant interference from above. Up to a point they can be convinced, of course, that interference is for their own good. But when it is demonstrably for their harm, they want to leave. A few weeks ago, we were hearing that 1 per cent of the Hungarian population has actually gone into voluntary exile. Today we discover that nearly half the population of Britain wishes to emigrate. The countries where whole peoples no longer wish to be cut right across the Iron Curtain.

Remembering Hungary

In common with most writers, I get an increasing number of appeals for me to sign letters of protest about Hungary.

Lately I've held back because I've felt that the names of the same people, occurring again and again to make similar protests, seems a demonstration of futility.

I have inquired what the people most interested feel about the action that should be taken for Hungary. Here are some replies.

Paul Ignotus, at a meeting in Paris, observed: "I think that expressions of sympathy and protests are both of them useful. There is nothing worse than the impression of being forgotten by the world outside."

George Paloczi-Horvath told me that when he was in prison for seven years before last October, prisoners in solitary confinement used to tap out the lines of poems they could remember, from cell to cell. (One of the things of which I feel most proud is his telling me that a translation of one of my poems was amongst the foreign works in this strange anthology). So besides thinking of what can or cannot affect governments, one should also think of the kind of communication which is possible with those who are prisoners. We are certainly justified in having faith that such demonstrations are heard; if not by the tyrants, then by their victims.

Cultural Relations as a Weapon

There has been correspondence in *The Times* and elsewhere discussing whether cultural relations should be broken off with Russia.

There are strong objections both to breaking off relations and to continuing them. Breaking off cultural relations seems stupid and uncivilised; continuing them when the Hungarian Writers' Association has been suppressed and nothing is known of the whereabouts of George Lukacz, heartless almost.

In the circumstances, might it not be intelligent to attach conditions to cultural relations?

The kind of instance I have in mind is this: for example, that organisations of writers and other intellectuals should refuse to meet officially-sent Hungarian writers, unless a reliable representative from here is permitted to go to Budapest, establish contact with the members of the banned Writers' Association, and obtain information about the fate of George Lukacz.

We should not enter into cultural relations unless certain conditions are observed.

The European Cultural Association

The European Cultural Association, situated at Venice, and run by the astonishing Professor U. Campagnolo, has just issued two documents. One is a declaration of the Executive Council, which contains the following statement: "Whether coming from outside or within a country, whether the result of military, political, police or economic pressures, oppression systematically maintained against the wishes of a people is a crime against culture." This seems forthright. The document is accompanied by a letter from Professor Campagnolo, the general secretary of the organisation, in which he states: "The Executive Council has agreed unanimously that for an institution which forbids itself every historic or political judgement, there is no question of its attempting to establish degrees of responsibility, or to pronounce condemnations, or to make protests."

Reading the two documents side by side, I have the impression that Professor Campagnolo spends his life conjugating the verb "to dupe". *I dupe, I am duped, that I may dupe, that I may be duped, I have duped, I shall dupe, etc.*"—past, present, future subjunctive, active and passive. And for the Executive Council, I suppose, the reflexive, *we dupe ourselves.*

Stephen Spender

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Comment

"The Un-beloved Country"

I HAVE no authority to speak for Father Huddleston, the Reverend Michael Scott, or Alan Paton, but as an admirer of their courage and a sympathiser with the beliefs of South African liberals, I would like to make a few comments apropos Colin Welch's article, "The Un-Beloved Country," in your February issue. He shows knowledge as well as courtesy, and raises important points about a most complex situation. Part of his argument is that the Liberals, committed to one side in the conflict, are too one-sided; are trying to liberate potentially dangerous forces which they do not fully understand and could not at all control; and tend to show, instead of "conservative foresight"—or, shall we say, political good sense—a tendency to wishful sentimentalism. This is not a baseless argument, but I would like to amplify a little Mr. Welch's allusions to Father Huddleston and Mr. Paton.

It seems to me that in Father Huddleston's case we must take account of his priestly functions, and in Mr. Paton's of his responsibilities as an artist. If Father Huddleston is in fact working for a "change of heart" that is surely not sentimental but properly Christian. The statesman or politician is mainly concerned with what is possible, with what is expedient, and with the timely and far-seeing choice of lesser evils: the Christian's whole-time concern (no theologian, I am open to correction) is surely to bring about by prayer, faith, and works, a change of heart in himself as well as others, and he is guided not by expediency but by the grace of God. Father Huddleston's temperament and behaviour look to me more like those of a saint than those of a statesman. Mr. Paton is, I know, active in the small and, as many think, politically negligible Liberal Party, but he has earned the right to be considered first as a writer. Lionel Trilling ends his book on E. M. Forster with an allusion to his raising of "the shield of Achilles," which is "the moral intelligence of art": Mr. Paton is another sort of writer, but he too has effectively exerted himself to extend "the moral intelligence of art."

Mr. Welch's references to the conceptions of black supremacy and white supremacy are perhaps a little cut-and-dried and a little too local. I do not believe that those who are opposed to the injustice and narrowness of the present white ascendancy would be any less opposed to the same forces if they were exerted by a non-white ascendancy. The South African liberals I have met do not seem to me to think basically in these terms of race and colour, but of what they conceive, with good authority, to be human rights, social justice, and reason. I have no doubt that they would welcome a change of head quite as much as a change of heart, though they do not seem so wishful as to think it likely. I doubt if they are so short-sighted or so imprudent as Mr. Welch seems to suggest. I think many of them feel that although their words or deeds may look ineffectual or unwise, these are in keeping with the Christian and democratic professions of the West—professions for which the non-white world as a whole, not merely the non-white majority in South Africa, has hardly shown, or had reason to show, a growing respect.

WILLIAM PLOMER

Rustington, Sussex

"Social Accomplishment"

MR. DAVID WRIGHT, who so vigorously attacks *Poetry Now* in your February number, is himself a contributor to a recent anthology, *Mavericks*, whose editors, Mr. Dannie Abse and Mr. Howard Sergeant, complain that the contributors have been unjustly neglected, because they are not in the fashion. Is it an example of what Mr. Wright calls my "prodigious indiscrimination" that four of these unjustly neglected poets, Mr. J. C. Hall, Mr. Michael Hamburger, Mr. Jon Silkin, and Mr. Wright himself, are also represented in my anthology? Is it an example also, perhaps, of my "prodigious indiscrimination" that two of the poets whom I included, not widely known when I included them, Constantine Trypanis and James Burns Singer, have just produced volumes of which one is a choice and the other a recommendation of the Poetry Book Society? Mr. Durrell, for whom Mr. Wright expresses a qualified admiration in the same review, is represented, I would have thought, by two very good poems; so are most of the brilliant group associated with him in the wartime anthology, *Personal Landscape*. Should I have left out these, or war poets like Alun Lewis, Keith Douglas, and Sidney Keyes? Or the "New Movement" poets, even though Mr. Wright does not like them? It is rather less than candid, also, of Mr. Wright to praise the editors of *New Poems, 1956* for printing work by Mr. Geoffrey Hill, who is "among the most potentially interesting of the younger poets," and not to give me any credit for printing a very fine poem by him. Should I perhaps have printed fewer Scottish and Irish poets? Most Scottish and Irish poets say I should have printed more! The main grouse seems, however, to be that I do not properly represent the "dionysianism, rhetoric, and romanticism" of the 1940's. The most distinguished representatives of that, I should have said, were Dylan Thomas and Mr. George Barker; they fell outside my terms of reference, as poets already famous in the 1930's. But I would have thought

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that with poems by, say, Mr. W. S. Graham, Mr. Vernon Watkins, Mr. John Heath-Stubbs, and Mr. Wright himself that "dionysianism, rhetoric, and romanticism"—it is to be found also in poets writing in Scots like Mr. Tom Scott and Mr. Sidney Goodsir Smith—was reasonably well represented. Nobody, I know, makes himself more universally unpopular than the man who tries to be fair to everybody. But I am certainly very curious to know how Mr. Wright himself would set about making a "representative" anthology of a period—that is, if he thought such a task worth undertaking. Finally, I don't grudge him his little jokes, but of course it is not true that for twenty years I have devoted myself almost solely to writing and talking about poetry. I wish one could earn a living so easily! I have done all sorts of other things ranging from writing books about South America to translating Gabriel Marcel's Gifford Lectures. I have never, in fact, at any time had the space to spread myself on current verse that Mr. Wright regularly enjoys in ENCOUNTER: if I did have such space I hope I would use it in a less personally polemical and a more objectively critical fashion.

G. S. FRASER

London, S.W.3

"Princes and Powers"

I READ "Princes and Powers" by James Baldwin in the January ENCOUNTER with much interest. It was a moving account. There are however some minor amendments I am inclined to add. Mr. Lasebikan spoke about *Yoruba* poetry not *Youriba*. The language became *written* not *oral* in the middle of the last century; and there was no occasion for Lasebikan to look sorry, since Yoruba was first extensively written by a West African, Bishop Samuel A. Crowther, who was given an honorary Doctorate in Divinity by Oxford University in 1864 for his translation of the Common Prayer and New Testament into Yoruba. (. . . *Testamenti Novi et Libri Precum Publicarum nostri bonam partem in sermones plures vernaculos reddidit.*) Pastor Ekollo was shouted down because he exceeded the time limit and because a large audience had gathered to hear Cesaire and were unwilling to taste a rather lengthy theological hors-d'œuvres.

Mr. Baldwin does not do justice to the American delegation. They were very distinguished and level-headed. On watching their exemplary behaviour and listening to their factual analysis of the Negro situation, one could not help wishing that the United States would send out such men into their foreign embassies and legations to illustrate all that is best in the complex racial situation in that country. The American delegation represented the Ralph Bunche-an tradition in American Negro society as against the boxer-singer-trumpeter counterparts one only hears about outside America.

The attitude of the French to the Congress was perhaps another feature which was worth noting. The Cultural Branch of the French Foreign Office gave the delegates a magnificent reception, although half the Congress spoke ferociously against colonialism. The only portions of the French press which paid any notice to the Congress were the Catholic and Socialist papers apart from cursory notes in a few others. The ambivalence of the French public was perhaps best shown by the beggar standing outside the gates of the Sorbonne who on receiving alms from some black Senegalese students attending the Conference said: "Thank you very much, messieurs, I knew you would give; you are French like ourselves, not like those North Africans!"

ABIOSEH NICOL

Cambridge

ONE of the more interesting, and perhaps also more unfortunate, features of colonialism is the spirit of opposition which it breeds in the people who must sooner or later take over the running of their own affairs. First, colonialism makes "outsiders" of them; then it makes "opposers" of them. . . . George Lamming was right when, as James Baldwin reports in the January issue of ENCOUNTER, he declared at the Paris Conference of Negro-African Writers and Artists last September that one of the greatest problems facing colonial peoples was what they would do "when there was no longer any colonial horse to ride."

The strength of the colonial intellectual, be he writer, artist, or politician, lies in his ability to give effective expression to the general feeling of opposition to colonialism. But to do this, however, he must not merely be a vehicle for the transmission of "opposition" ideas. He must himself be imbued with the spirit of opposition. He must feel that it is very meet and right and his bounden duty to keep this spirit alive, not only in himself but in all whom he may be able to influence.

The danger is that when it is no longer really needed, this spirit of opposition will still be very much alive. It is far easier to kindle it than to extinguish it. This is already evident in areas which have achieved a large measure of self-government. Although they have now become the "government," some former colonial politicians continue to act as though they were still in the opposition. And those who are not in the "government" become even more vigorous in *their* opposition to the "government."

The same is true of many writers who tend to continue to draw their inspiration from a sense of conflict and frustration which ought already to have ceased to exist.

It may be true, as many claim, that colonialism contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction; but it appears also to contain the power of so fascinating its destroyers that they are in danger of spending their lives gazing on the ruins in a spirit of satisfied vengeance. Or, perhaps, the cynics are right when they say that colonialism develops in its subjects the kind of mentality which ensures its perpetuation.

J. O'NEIL LEWIS

London, S.W.1

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BOOKS

A Great Enigma

When he was an old man Hilaire Belloc was visited by a Frenchman who came away in much perplexity. "*J'avais l'impression,*" said the Frenchman, "*d'un prophète qui se trompe toujours.*" After Belloc's death, in a noble panegyric pronounced at the Requiem Mass in Westminster Cathedral, Mgr. Ronald Knox reverted to the same theme. "Here was a man," he said, "who interpreted divine things for us, under homely images and in our common speech. He was a prophet. When I say that," Mgr. Knox added, "I do not mean to suggest that he had any special skill in forecasting future events. . . ."

In spite of considerable successes enjoyed by doctrinaire parties in England, Free Traders in the 19th century and Socialist planners today, it remains true (one of the few tested generalisations about us) that the British character is not a dogmatic one. Great sacrifices for the sake of convictions are not readily understood by Englishmen. But for that very reason the dogmatist sometimes enjoys his occasional and peculiar triumph in the English-speaking world. He is uncommon, he satisfies a felt need, he is a breath of fresh air amid the staleness of unbelief. I think this fact essentially explains Hilaire Belloc's position. He was one of the most dogmatic men who have ever lived, and though relatively few people believed what he said, his English readers could not but rejoice that he said it. In manner and substance he was a prophet. Sometimes he was inspired; more often than not he was the victim of bees in the bonnet. He was an unreliable guide. He hated his position but could not abandon or modify it. He was the most sincere of men.

A little more than three years after his death, Mr. Robert Speaight has produced a full, definitive, and immensely entertaining biography* of this most singular man and great master of language. The book is written with much regard for its subject but without any of the tedium of hagiography. It is a vivid picture of an intensely vivid and vigorous human being whose virtues were of a heroic order and whose faults were so extraordinary as to be fascinating. Belloc is difficult to judge, especially in an age of specialisation, because of his enormous variety. The test then, surely, of a good picture of Belloc is whether, when the variety is fully represented, as here, the result shows a single and harmonious individual. Well, there can be no doubt that Mr. Speaight passes that test, though not everyone will agree with the proportional weight given by the portraitist to every item in Belloc's diversity. Mr. Speaight shows excellent drawing in emphasising Belloc's persistent melancholy and the lack of pious emotion (a thing few people knew of) which made the unflagging practice of his religion a continual effort and trial. He indicates with a sure hand the relatively trivial extent to which the beer and heartiness, by which he is too well known to some, represented the essential man. I think myself that Mr. Speaight underestimates Belloc's gift of farcical humour, and I would have liked something on that forgotten novel, *The Emerald*, Belloc's best excursion into detective fiction, which strikes me as among the half-dozen funniest books of the last fifty years. Then, dealing with grave matters, Mr. Speaight might

* *Hilaire Belloc*. By Robert Speaight. Hollis and Carter. 30s.

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have made the picture more understandable to many readers by giving some account of Belloc's spiritual ancestry.

To a great majority of people living at the same time as he did, Belloc was first and foremost a great apologist for the Catholic Church, "the Faith," as he usually called it. His courage, sincerity, and virtue in this rôle were often beyond praise as when, standing as a Liberal in 1906 for South Salford, he was advised to play down his religion in view of the Tory slogan in the constituency, "Don't vote for a Frenchman and a Catholic." He ignored the advice as unworthy, and at his opening electoral meeting he brought a rosary out of his pocket and spoke as follows: "Gentlemen, I am a Catholic. As far as possible I go to Mass every day. This is a rosary. As far as possible I kneel down and tell those beads every day. If you reject me on account of my religion, I shall thank God that he has spared me the indignity of being your representative." The electors recognised the merit of a man who could speak like that and voted him into Parliament. If only he had always maintained the apologia on such a level what a soldier of Christ he might have been! But it was not to be so.

Belloc's greatest misfortune, I believe, was that his mind had been early contaminated by latter-day Neo-Ultramontanism (to borrow Wilfred Ward's precise but clumsy expression), and his noble loyalty to the Church was, throughout life, inextricably confounded with the absurdities of that school. He bore a strong resemblance to William ("Ideal") Ward, the main and first publicist of the Neo-Ultramontane party in England. On the French side he was a spiritual descendant of Louis Veuillot and the Abbé Gaume. He inherited their tendency, which nearly brought the Church to schism in 1870, towards fantasy and extremism in dogma, and towards devotionalism at the expense of everything else, not least at the expense of a sober and needed sense of what is essential to Christianity. The influence of the Veuillot–Ward school has been lasting, and well after their time it was possible for Belloc, speaking as a Catholic apologist, to say this about his co-religionists: "They are not specially careful that their children should hear the Lord's Prayer, the Sermon on the Mount, or a translation of the Jewish Scriptures. They are specially careful that their children have about them emblems significant of the Faith, as the Crucifix, and statues of Our Lady and of the Saints. . . ." None of this was said in denigration, but could a Protestant enemy of Catholicism say more? In fairness to Belloc, and Neo-Ultramontanes of his mind, the

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conclusion of the sentence should be quoted. Catholics, Belloc continued, desire that their children "should thoroughly know the Penny Catechism; that they should regularly attend Mass; that they should appreciate . . . the physical presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. . . ." If it is argued that these latter assertions are a moderate and clear statement of orthodox Christian belief, can it also be argued that they efface what is conveyed by the opening assertions of this skilled propagandist, that they obliterate a painful (and highly libellous) impression of a religion which values pious trinkets above the teachings of Christ? I think not. He was wholly typical of the 19th century enthusiasts from whom he derived, and he helped on the process whereby their extravagances are often accepted as orthodoxy in popular ideas.

To say such things may seem harsh when we consider the long fidelity of Belloc to the Church, his admirable, needed, and effective counterblasts to the facile scepticism of "the common man" and his prophet Wells, the saintly manner in which his life and religion were merged into one. As a man expounding the merits of the Church by his way of living, Belloc was not only a good Catholic but among the best, of the salt of the earth. As a destructive controversialist he time and again blew away imposing nonsense to the immense benefit of all his contemporaries. But this was not enough for his self-fulfilment. By his nature and his antecedents he was a prophet, unable, *quoiqu'il se trompait toujours*, to escape his fate which was sealed by the over-confident party to which he belonged. Belloc would have been appalled at any suggestion that the Catholic Church is a feast of Unreason, but some of his writings, such as that last quoted, and his unwitting association of Catholicism with grotesque political theories, certainly helped to spread that idea.

The dangers of the school to which Belloc belonged showed their real malignity in "profane" activity where the constraining force of Christian morals was not immediate. In his political career, and his political writings, Belloc's natural generosity of mind, and his frequent flashes of wisdom, were for ever being cancelled by his chronic perversity. As a radical he saw an enemy of man in the conscienceless workings of big business and finance. But unfortunately, in common with many Continental Neo-Ultramontane politicians, he saw this arch-enemy in racial terms, and following bad French models (and ignoring good ones) all he succeeded in doing in his struggle against what Henry James justly called "the black merciless things" was further to popularise popular prejudices from Germany and Russia about the Jews. He revered Edouard Drumont and adopted his brand of anti-Semitism. As late as 1932, Belloc was deploring the fact that English Catholics were not anti-Dreyfusard! The rise of Nazism did as little to shake his anti-Semitism as the pogroms had done before. Mr. Speaight says all that can be said in mitigation but it is not much. Perhaps the only defence is that the politics of literary men are usually absurd, and that the political ideals of Belloc were not more disreputable and contemptible than those of literary men in the generations which came after him.

HE WAS a great writer. Even those books in the writing of which he took little trouble, such as his *Wolsey*, contain marvellous things. His poetry is as fresh today as when it was first published and he achieved unique effects, for example the effortless conjunction of comically-treated religious controversy and profound religious sentiment in "The Ballad of Illegal Ornaments." He was among the very few in an age of mannerism and privacy to write first-rate poetry which was accessible to everyone, so accessible that "keen contemporary minds" are only beginning to appreciate it now. (Less keen minds have no difficulty.) It is a melancholy fact that he never had the leisure or patronage to enable him to produce a large-scale masterpiece with which his name could be for ever associated. Mr. Speaight subscribes to Desmond MacCarthy's belief that the great unwritten book was a definitive life of Napoleon. (I think so, too, but with the reservation that he *might* have gone wrong again and indulged in an orgy of hero-worship.) At its worst there is something so stimulating about Belloc's writing that you feel that, no matter how colossal the wrong-headedness, here is the work of a noble-minded man. At his best he was superb. If he had been wrong just a little less often he would stand comparison with Doctor Johnson.

Reading Robert Speaight's book, Belloc scenes inevitably come back to mind: the short, stout, square figure in black with the gigantic strength of personality, the undeniable presence of genius, and the comedy that could make you double up with laughter. Let me record a Belloc occasion which softens the memory of his besetting mania. I was the listener, and Belloc and Desmond MacCarthy were talking about pictures of Jews in literature. Belloc insisted that there was no really satisfying Jewish character to be found in all fiction: Disraeli's Jews were romantic nonsense, George Eliot's not much more convincing, and he went on to talk about French books. "No one," said Desmond MacCarthy, when he could force a word in, "no one has shown the duality of Jewish character, the passion to amass

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possessions, and the passion to give them away." "Oh yes," fluted Belloc, "that is quite r-r-right. They are givers. They have given us r-r-remarkable things . . . Communism . . . the Catholic Church. . . ."

My best Belloc memory is at second hand, from my sister. The time was 1938, a lunch party. My sister heard someone mention the League of Nations to him, and he summed up that institution in two words: "Masonic r-r-rot."

Christopher Sykes

A GRECIAN EYE

THE title sequence of Mr. Trypanis' book* consists of thirteen poems, each headed by a phrase or sentence from the Iliad upon which it is a comment. The risk of such a procedure is of being unintelligible to those to whom the original means nothing, and the Iliad is one of the very few poems which could be used in this way. To Mr. Trypanis, as a Greek, it must, of course, have a unique significance, historically and poetically, but to any citizen of the West, however Greekless, the Homeric world is the archetype of his own. Even the proper names, Diomedes, Pedasus, Deiphobos, etc., have a poetic resonance in his ear which the proper names in, say, an Indian epic cannot have.

A poem which is to serve as an image of man and the world and so itself stimulate further poems must have two qualities, historical distance and universality. The reader must be simultaneously aware of how different the world it describes is from his own and yet how analogous. Thus the Iliad, like most epics, assumes that war is as normal a human activity as farming and sees it in terms of personal combat. Precisely because, for us, war is neither, the epic conflict can serve as an image of man, as a history-making creature, necessarily at odds with what he is since he has to become something else, and aware that, since no human experience can recur, every moment is death.

Again, epic celebrates the hero, that is, the exceptionally gifted individual, stronger, braver, wiser than the average, and this can serve us as a symbol for the quite unhomeric conception of the uniqueness of every human person, which has nothing whatever to do with his gifts or lack of them.

I am always expecting the Communists to interpret the Aeneid as an *Ur*-Marxist poem, the first attempt to see history as a dialectical conflict with an inevitable and sense-making conclusion. To those of us who are not Marxists, the Iliad is the more sympathetic work precisely because it does not attempt to make sense of the Trojan War. Men fight and die because "hateful Ares bids." This is terrifying but, at least, it lacks that revolting justification for horror which is implied by the expression: "You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs." Mr. Trypanis, in my opinion, is over-generous to Virgil when he writes:

Pious Aeneas does not move, especially
Since we know, what you did not know, Virgil,
The Empire after Augustus.

Virgil did know the history of the Roman Republic, he knew about the Punic wars, Marius, Sulla, etc., and that should have been enough.

TO SHOW what Mr. Trypanis' poems are about, let me give some quotations. The homeric line "And with them eighty black ships followed" makes him think of the anonymous millions who throughout history are involved and perish in causes they do not understand.

They did not know why they were setting out,
They did not want to fight the whole damned
Army of Troy, or to bring Helen back.
They never cared a jot, they never learnt
How their eighty ships rowed
Into the second book of the Iliad. All they knew
Was Diomedes of the loud war-cry, their lord.

The unexplained absence of Hector's spearman at the moment when Achilles is upon him, he takes as a figure for the solitude of every death.

There must be a Deiphobos who will not hear.
And if there isn't one, the urgency of death
Conjures him up. . . .
Hoping your heart like steel will break, not bend,
Call to Deiphobos, although he cannot hear,
Because Deiphobos is your best friend.
Break out into angry curses at this raw deal,
Swearing makes you less alone—and death's dark frown
Looks less humiliating when you feel
It was Deiphobos who let you down.

And Achilles' mistreatment of Hector's corpse

* *The Stones of Troy.* By C. A. TRYPANIS. Faber and Faber. 10s. 6d.

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becomes a parable about genuine passion and shameful habit.

It can become a habit every morning
To drag broad Hector's body round the tomb,
Fling it face downward, and with hollow scorning
Return to your beaked hut, the hours of gloom.

It can become a habit, but the heart
Will soon forget her barren anger-lust.
Only your hands will act the villain part. . . .

As will be seen from these passages, much of their effect depends upon a contrast between the epic subject-matter and the deliberate avoidance of the high epic style. Diction and rhythm are kept as near as possible to what Professor C. S. Lewis would call the drab. The technical difficulty in writing verse which is conversational in tone and rhythm yet formally rhymed is to make the speech unit and the rhythm-rhyme unit coincide without strain, and occasionally, I think, Mr. Trypanis trips up on this.

And will offer food—Niobe long before
You tasted food in her stone grief. Back to the city
You will bring Hector's body untouched, and what is more
Will make Achilles greater in his pity.

Here the speech unit "Niobe long before you" has been broken for the sake of the rhyme. But Mr. Trypanis is rarely guilty of such awkwardness.

As deliberate as the plainness of the diction, is the sparing use of metaphor. It is, indeed, unfair to this kind of poetry to quote lines out of a poem because, in isolation, they sound like commonplace statements. The complexity of feeling and reference lie in the poem as a whole: the poem itself, so to speak, is a metaphor.

I CAN imagine someone, who read these poems without knowing their authorship, guessing them to be translations of hitherto unknown poems by Cavafy. About this two things may be said. Firstly, that what matters is, not that a poem be original, but that it be genuine. Secondly, though Mr. Trypanis writes in English, he and Cavafy are both Greeks.

When an Englishman reads, say, Racine and Mallarmé, they seem much more like each other than they do to a Frenchman, because what the English reader notices first is the difference between all French poetry and all English poetry.

When a poet of entirely English ancestry and background reads the Iliad, his feelings, whatever they are, cannot escape being affected by

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two facts: that England has not been invaded for nine hundred years, and that England has been a great imperial power.

He can imagine himself, for example, in the epic situation of defending the narrow pass against hopeless odds, but he cannot really imagine that his side will not win in the end. A Greek, like Mr. Trypanis, can imagine final defeat quite easily.

Again, he may be pro- or anti-imperialist but he can never see history from the point of view of someone bred in a country which has never been a great ruling power. A Greek inherits memories of a time when Greece was great, but as a collection of city states and colonies, not as a centralised military empire.

One of the characteristics of Mr. Trypanis' poetry which I find particularly refreshing, because it is rare in English poetry, is that of pessimism without a trace of melancholia.

English poets are excellent at expressing melancholia: when they try to be pessimists, they generally sound too theoretical and theatrical.

The Stones of Troy is a collection of real and beautiful poems. In addition, given the times in which we live, the attitude to life which they embody is one of which we may well stand in moral need.

W. H. Auden

VOX POPULI, VOX DEI?

EACH nation has its orthodoxy which it tries to pass off as its history. In the United States, this orthodoxy is populism: the history of America is seen as the progressive democratisation of American society and American politics, the progressive conquest of power by The People—and the word "progressive" in this context is definitely meant to imply a righteous, elevating, and generally improving process. This state of mind was born with the Republic itself, many of whose first citizens had no hesitation in proudly declaring themselves the enlightened torch-bearers of the human race. At that time, however, there were still men of caution who felt that America would do well merely to achieve the classical virtues of republicanism without attempting anything so ambitious as the remaking of all social institutions in the image of that superior being, the Average Man. Even Jefferson himself could write, in a disillusioned moment, in 1815: "I fear from the experience of the last twenty-five years that morals do not of necessity advance hand in hand with the sciences." But this caution went unheeded and populism has triumphed in ideology as The People have triumphed in fact.

In the past decade, however, there has been a growing inclination among American thinkers to question the assumption that, if democracy is a good thing, the more democracy we have the better. Many of the troublesome problems of American life are now seen to arise not so much from the accidental, imperfect workings of representative institutions as from the continual effort to extend the principles of democracy beyond their proper capacities—to make them, not simply functional guides to the working of the political order, but dogmas prescribing a whole "way of life." Perhaps the greatest single impulse to such reflection has been the experience of McCarthyism. Most Europeans have regarded this, in the light of their own past, as an anti-democratic reactionary movement. Americans, on the other hand, are aware that it was not, in any precise sense, anti-democratic or reactionary at all, but rather a particular version of that democratic-populist radicalism which has been the dominant passion of American society. Senator McCarthy, as Professor Edward Shils points out,* is the heir of Andrew Jackson, Bryan, and LaFollette—not the only heir, to be sure, but a legitimate heir nevertheless.

Mr. Shils' book is easily the most important to have been produced under the stimulus of McCarthyism, and offers an invaluable introduction to American realities of a kind that will not be found in the more conventional guides. (English readers, who will remember his essay in this magazine on "The English Intellectuals," will be especially interested in his extensive comparisons between American and British society.) Though Mr. Shils was moved to write his book by McCarthyism, he wisely decided to essay something more than a polemical tract for the times. "A great society," he writes, "should not allow its partial recovery from a humiliating and unjustifiable lapse from decent conduct to diminish the necessity for the conscientious scrutiny of that lapse. It must try to understand in the most detached and unimpassioned way what that lapse signifies in terms of its own history and general principles." Moreover, his analysis has a universal import, for the American populism he examines is significantly connected

* *The Torment of Secrecy*. By EDWARD SHILS. Heinemann. 15s.

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with the general dominion of extremist ideologies: it is not for nothing that Communists stubbornly insist on using the phrase "people's democracies" for régimes that are obviously neither democratic nor popular.

TO GET a clear notion of what American populism is, one can with advantage study its influence on that current of American thought where one would not at first expect to find any significant trace of it—I mean American liberalism. Conveniently, there has been published in this country, simultaneously with Mr. Shils' book, another on almost the same subject which can serve as a near-perfect illustration. Its author, James Russell Wiggins,* is a distinguished liberal indeed, being executive editor of the *Washington and Times Herald* (the nearest thing America can offer in the way of a *Manchester Guardian*) and Chairman of the Freedom of Information Committee of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. A good deal of what he says about the tendency of modern government—and especially the military branch of it—towards an obsessive concern with secrecy is well taken. In this, he is on the side of the angels. But how easy it is to glide, through the thin air of populist rhetoric, into deep water! Mr. Wiggins sets out to defend freedom and ends, in effect, by defending McCarthyism—without even realising it. He self-righteously claims prerogatives in the name of certain principles without bothering to consider what would happen if others, not of his political disposition, followed his lead.

Thus, for Mr. Wiggins, freedom of the press means the right to take photographs in court; to publish the names and photographs of juvenile offenders; to make public the identities of the victims in cases of rape; to broadcast the names of persons and firms found guilty of petty and unintentional transgressions of governmental administrative regulations; to examine and quote from all court proceedings and trial documents (including, naturally, cases of seduction, abortion, divorce, etc.); to comment pretty much without restraint on law cases that are *sub judice*; to attend and report on all gatherings of private individuals for the discussion of public problems; to be informed of all decisions on public policy taken by private organisations; to report all statements made by public figures to groups of private citizens; to publicise all violations by private individuals, not only of laws, but of customs and conventions as well—and so on and on, along the lines of a circulation manager's sweetest dream.

Mr. Wiggins justifies these claims with considerable populist ingenuity ("Government never will be able to cope with juvenile crime until it is handled in a way that calls forth the interest, compassion, co-operation, and support of all the people") and not a little populist sanctimony ("What happens to any human being is of concern to all others. . . . At its best, this all-pervading curiosity, so deeply implanted in man, is an acknowledgement of the oneness of mankind"). What does not seem to occur to him is that his shoe can very nicely fit on quite other feet. All minority groups and minority opinions are, in a democracy, subject to the coercion of public opinion; without the right of privacy, they cannot exist. If, as a United States legislator, Senator McCarthy were to claim the privileges that Mr. Wiggins accords to journalists (and on what grounds could he be denied them?), he would have an irreproachable sanction for all of his activities. If public exposure is the nation's bulwark against sly conspiracy, and at the same time a method of civic education for the people at large, then it is difficult to see why Mr. Wiggins should have been so astonished and distressed that congressional committees have gone in heavily for it. To be sure, he is an editor and has an exalted view of the rôle of the press; but everyone tends to have an exalted view of his own vocation, and it is not at all self-evident that the "rights" and "obligations" of the press should be denied to other groups of men who are only too willing to assume them.

IT IS a pleasure, after reading Mr. Wiggins, to return to Mr. Shils and be told bluntly: "A free society can exist only when public spirit is balanced by an equal inclination to mind one's own business. . . . No society is capable of sustaining the unremitting interest of all of its citizens all the time, or even most of its citizens most of the time. . . . Democracy requires the occasional political participation of most of its citizenry some of the time, and a moderate and dim perceptiveness—as if from the corner of the eye—the rest of the time." He traces the rise of the demand for publicity from the original 18th-century liberal revolt against the monarch's *arcana imperium* to its present cancerous overgrowth in the idea that "the people have a right to know," and he demonstrates how this rage for exposure itself gives rise to an exaggerated terror of conspiracy (e.g., the Sixty Families, the Trusts, the Red Network, etc.). For the compulsive need to know other people's "secrets" arises from a longing to be surrounded by a consoling like-mindedness—a longing which is intrinsically insatiable, humanity being as various and perverse as it is. The only possible

* *Freedom or Secrecy*. By JAMES RUSSELL WIGGINS. Oxford University Press. 24s.

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uniformity that can be attained is forced and mechanical, with the result that one is perpetually haunted by the ghosts of subversion.

Mr. Shils also analyses the way in which the humanitarian element in American populism, associated with such proposals as the referendum, the initiative, the recall, and the public control of the railroads and other utilities, is ideologically entwined with a plebeian distrust of all government, a rude scorn of the "effete" Eastern seaboard, a deep hostility toward "upper class" Europe, and a Jacobin sensitivity to all "conspiracies against the interests of the People." This movement found its first successful expression in Jacksonian Democracy, with its hatred of bankers and its contempt for a professional civil service; but it was after the Civil War that it firmly established itself as the American orthodoxy. As Mr. Shils puts it:

> The development of sensational popular journalism coincided with the efflorescence of political and intellectual populism [in] . . . the post-Civil War period. . . . Congressional investigations [also] fitted perfectly into the populistic pattern of saving the people from the schemes of the powerful. . . . The rise into the intelligentsia of the offspring of the ethnic groups which fell outside the sphere of hegemony of culture of the Eastern seaboard bred a generation in which restraint was not a virtue, in which distance, deference and reserve were not esteemed. . . . American culture has become "wide open". . . . Even suppression is achieved or sought through publicity.

This populist temper has native American roots in Puritanism, which asserted that salvation lay in acting, thinking, and feeling in certain specifically prescribed ways, and in the *ethos* of the frontier community. But this temper is not exclusive to America. In Europe, the Jacobin tradition in France and the *Narodnik* tradition in Russia moved along strikingly similar lines. It is not the least virtue of Mr. Shils' book that he is aware of the extent to which American populism has been but one facet of a general tendency within all of Western society toward ideological politics and away from what might be called the civic tradition. Where this tradition aimed at a pragmatic social harmony, ideological politics insists that the fulfilment of its ideals is the highest good, to which a mere civic equilibrium must be subordinate. Furthermore, this radical commitment to ideals and its accompanying contempt for matter-of-factness in public affairs has given rise to the most disastrous assumption of 20th century politics: the assumption that one who espouses our values, only more aggressively and intransigently than we do, is closer to us than one who opposes them in a spirit of moderation. In the light of the events of the past three decades, there should be little need to argue that, unless this premise is explicitly repudiated, the social and political order is ripe for catastrophic division.

One has the impression that, of late, ideological passions have been subsiding—less, perhaps, out of any sudden enlargement of the stock of political wisdom than of sheer exhaustion. But if this is true of the Western world, it is not at all true of Asia and other "underdeveloped" areas. There the civic tradition has been shattered by colonialism, and ideological passion rushes in to fill the gap. One hopes that Mr. Shils' book will be read, and his insights appreciated, in those parts of the world. Otherwise, we in the West may discover that we really are engaged in a bloody contest with an army of ghosts—the spectres of our own past.

Irving Kristol

ISAAC BABEL

IN HIS penetrating introduction to the short stories of Isaac Babel,* Mr. Lionel Trilling records that on the first appearance of the collection *Red Cavalry* in 1929 he was "disturbed in a way I can still remember. . . . It was obviously the most remarkable work of fiction that had yet come out of revolutionary Russia. . . . Yet for me it was all too heavily charged with the intensity, irony, and ambiguousness from which I wished to escape"—qualities that seemed to him in those earlier days of the "Russian experiment" more characteristic of the old complex capitalist-democratic world of the West than of the new dispensation in Moscow. In place of an artistic syllogism or blueprint had appeared an enigma. Those, like myself, who come first to Babel in 1957 will find that the intervening twenty-eight years have done nothing to lessen the impact: if the enigma is, as the main outlines of Russian post-revolution history define themselves more clearly, less enigmatical, its implications appear continually deepened, richened, more ironic, and more tragical. We

* *The Collected Stories of Isaac Babel.* Introduction by LIONEL TRILLING. Methuen. 18s.

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ask only why this man, surely the supreme master of his genre since the days of Chekov and Maupassant, has rested unreprinted and become not even a name to a subsequent generation.

Babel was born a ghetto Jew of Odessa in 1894. He describes himself (all his stories are more or less autobiographical; perhaps—though we are not told—entirely so): "Like all Jews I was short, weakly, and had headaches from studying." He had "spectacles on his nose and autumn in [his] heart." And yet—and this is the first great anomaly of Babel—we find him in 1920 serving as supply officer in the Polish campaign to, of all things, a regiment of Budenny's Cossacks, the very Antipodes of the Jew in the great circle of humanity; for as Mr. Trilling remarks, "The Jew conceived his own ideal character to consist in his being intellectual, pacific, humane. The Cossack was physical, violent, without mind or manners." But this is only the beginning of the self-contradictions inherent in the narrator's position in *Red Cavalry*, the series of sketches of this campaign which adds up to one of the most astonishing visions of a war in literature, and is his most elaborate and sustained work. A Communist Cossack is a political alogy, in any case; and how was Babel to reconcile his own intense sensitivity to the personal, the unique inscape of the individual human being, with the doctrinaire egalitarianism of the Lenin he so admired? Or his understanding, and experience, of suffering with the callousness that was very bone of the Cossack ethos which he also appeared so passionately to admire and to wish to identify himself with?

The answer is that he did not, on any superficial level, attempt so to reconcile, and this is one reason why Babel's writing leaves such a maddening and equivocal taste on the mouth: cruelty, poetry, pity, faith, scepticism, traditionalism, iconoclasm co-exist—may even all huddle together in a single stunning half-page—and yet instead of cancelling themselves out they add up to something new and not easily apprehensible, of which to enquire whether it is "bad" or "good" would seem a juggling with terms no longer relevant. For there is nevertheless reconciliation, but at usually unexplored levels. One obvious flux is the sense of beauty—a startling, breath-catching power of vision and composition which fuses all incongruous elements into an irreducible alloy; but also there is something more purely human and personal, which I can only express by saying that these self-contradictory attitudes notwithstanding present themselves unmistakably as the very signature of a unified and integrated man. To quote Mr. Trilling again: "the apparent denial of immediate pathos is a condition of the ultimate pathos the writer conceives." All criticism of Babel inevitably leads into the paradox as if into a refuge or escape.

IT IS time that I attempted to give an example. "My First Goose" is one of the key tales of *Red Cavalry*, the account of the author's first reception in his Cossack regiment. Babel begins thus:

> *Savitsky, Commander of the VI Division, rose when he saw me, and I wondered at the beauty of his giant's body. He rose, the purple of his riding breeches and the crimson of his little tilted cap and the decorations stuck on his chest cleaving the hut as a standard cleaves the sky. A smell of scent and the sickly fresh sweetness of soap emanated from him. His long legs were like girls sheathed to the neck in shining riding boots.*

Savitsky finishes signing a blood-and-thunder directive, turns to Babel, comments, half in kindness, half in contempt, on his weakly and bespectacled appearance—"This is a hot place for specs. Think you'll get on with us?" The quartermaster carries Babel's trunk for him to his billet: "Nuisance with specs," says the

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quartermaster. "Can't do anything to stop it, either. Not a life for the brainy type here. But you go and mess up a lady, and a good lady too, and you'll have the boys patting you on the back."

The other officers in the billet mock Babel; he tries to read a report in *Pravda* of a speech by Lenin, but they will not leave him in peace. He asks the landlady for food, and she refuses him apathetically. A goose is waddling across the yard. Babel crushes its head with his boot, spits it on his sword, and hands it to the landlady for cooking. "The lad's all right," say the Cossacks: they offer him a share of their supper, and ask him (as the only literate person amongst them) to read them the speech of Lenin. Then,

> *We slept, all six of us, beneath a wooden roof that let in the stars, warming one another, our legs intermingled. I dreamed: and in my dreams saw women. But my heart, stained with bloodshed, grated and brimmed over.*

The whole account has occupied less than five pages.

One may notice, even from this short resumé, certain peculiar aspects of this tale. One of them is the strangely equivocal flavour of the opening, the description of Savitsky. By all the rules it *ought* to be sexually perverse; and yet, as Mr. Trilling observes (if I lean on his Introduction so heavily, it is because I find myself in total agreement at almost every point of it), "it is remarkably not perverse." It is an expression of envy and admiration of one male for another which, in spite of the "legs like girls sheathed to the neck in shining riding boots," remains wholly non-homosexual. Then the reader will notice the construction of the story, in which the themes (Savitsky, women, Lenin, the goose) are united, not by the narrative plot, but by an inner logic independent of it—a construction so typical of Babel as to be practically a hallmark, and which alone would single him out as an altogether exceptional master. But what probably bulks largest in the summary, the brutality towards the goose, is no more in the story itself than one wheel among many in a watch, indispensable but not outstanding. And the whole incident echoes in the most curious way what we may imagine to have been the central incident of his childhood; the occasion described in "My First Dovecot" when, fearing nothing, he goes out to buy his first pigeons on the morning of a pogrom, and a beggar whom he has always loved, infuriated that his infirmity prevents his joining in the looting, takes it out on the child by smashing his pigeon across his face. Later he sees his father kneeling uselessly in the street to a Cossack officer who is indifferent to a life in ruins. The price of Babel's astonishing escape to the ranks of the oppressor from those of the oppressed is the killing of the goose, an "initiation test" of manhood demanding, not the Jewish virtue of the ability to bear suffering, but the un-Jewish one of the ability to cause it. How easy the first would have been! But it is the second that is demanded of him.

This is no more than the merest scraping at the surface of a writer who will surely be subjected, for better or worse, to an intensity of criticism in the years to come. No one who is interested in writing as an art can afford to miss this last representative of the great Russian writers. This final representative, I might have said—at any rate for our time. For shall we see more? Babel wrote in the first heady ecstasy of world revolution, when all the black chrysalises of the haunted past seemed to have been burst open and Man, pure, poetic, Godless, and equal, would emerge in clouds of golden-winged fraternity. Babel last wrote in 1932. In 1934 in his last recorded utterance, a speech at the first Writer's Congress, he described himself as "master of a new literary genre, the genre of silence." He died in the early 1940's, by means unknown, in the concentration camp to which he had been sent some three or four years earlier.

Hilary Corke

UNCLE TOM AS AUNT SALLY

IT IS, as various commentators have noted, almost impossible to be an intelligent conservative in America, because conservatism and sheer bigotry look so much alike. When the wolf is not in sheep's clothing, the sheep is in wolf's. To desire a stable social order and what Henry James called a "sweet and *whole* national consciousness" is to become in some measure a selfish cad. To be for some such idea is to be against certain groups of other people, and to be against them in ugly ways: to keep the Negro a slave, or an underling, to seek to exclude altogether immigrants newer than oneself.

This truth, in its sad complexity, is examined by Barbara Miller Solomon in an excellent case-history of Boston's Brahmins between the

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American Civil War and the First World War.* Readers of *The Education of Henry Adams* will be familiar with one diagnosis—the more painful for being autobiographical—of the Bostonian as displaced person. Mrs. Solomon shows that it was only a partial diagnosis. For the full story it is necessary to catch the tone of private letters or dinner-table jokes among cronies as well as the more public and civic utterances. She investigates not only the Adams family but a score of others who, first with sympathy, then in dismay, and finally in anger and outrage, watched the influx of "foreigners" into *their* New England. Nothing of the old dispensation remained intact. Pleasant streets turned into slums, peaceful villages and ancestral homes (like the Adams place at Quincy) were overrun; the town-meeting, New England's prime democratic exhibit, became a travesty; the schools were filled with alien children. Political control likewise passed to the invaders: Boston had its first Irish mayor in 1884.

What was the remedy? To cling to—or more accurately perhaps, to invent (as Southerners had formerly done)—a notion of racial integrity, of "Anglo-Saxon" superiority: to lose interest in the Society for Promoting Good Citizenship and to devote one's energies instead to the Immigration Restriction League. An ignoble transfer, mean and snobbish; yet also pathetic, uncomfortable, and futile. The League eventually won its campaign, but only when the struggle as a whole was lost. In a country dedicated to the future, the Brahmin (again like the Southerner) appealed in vain to the past. In a country proud of its generosity, the enlightened Bostonian made furtive, querulous complaints about Jews and "Micks" and Negroes. "Discrimination" meant good taste: it now meant bad taste as well, the bad taste of prejudice.

Hopeless, then, the lot of the well-intentioned conservative. Is it also nearly impossible to be an intelligent liberal in America? We could draw this conclusion, at any rate as applied to ethnic problems, from Mr. J. C. Furnas.† In his study of Negroes in America hardly anyone emerges with credit. With reason, he is hostile to the out-and-out segregationists, the Dixiecrat apologists who *know* the Negro is their inferior and are determined to perpetuate their own advantages. He is also, with a degree of acuteness, critical of present-day liberals—the Northern "Mixiecrats," as a South Carolina newspaper has dubbed them—who are as bland as their opponents are bitter. No one must dislike anyone else; by act of faith, denying the immediate evidence of what they see or what their parents tell them, children must absorb the chummy gospel that we are all alike, once we have learned to ignore such superficial accidents as skin-colour, religion, social class, home environment, and so on. To mean well, Mr. Furnas argues, is not enough.

Certainly he does not think it is enough in the case of Harriet Beecher Stowe, whom he cannot abide. If the Mixiecrat represents the liberal as simpleton, Mrs. Stowe apparently is the liberal as crypto-racist. The charge against her has been put by others—by the Negro novelist James Baldwin, for instance—in advance of Mr. Furnas. Briefly, it is that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has worked insidious harm. Read by millions who thought they were moved by its message, it has actually impressed on their minds a form of "racist propaganda" by depicting the average Negro as a nigger-minstrel caricature, the intelligent Negro as a mulatto whose white blood has improved him, and Uncle Tom as one who—apart from recommending to Negroes the Christian virtues of loyalty and humility—offers the assurance that salvation for Negroes in the next world is a substitute for justice in this one.

Mr. Furnas repeats other accusations: that Mrs. Stowe was a careless and sometimes disingenuous writer; that she knew little of slavery at first-hand, and nothing of life on plantations or in the Deep South; that her view was distorted by Abolitionist cant as well as by hidden racism. For him, she is "glib, lazy-minded," a "literary property who set herself down in thirty-odd volumes of fiction, polemics, travel, pious verse, lay sermons, and simpering twaddle." Nearly everything about her is derided, in the knowing, nudging language of the debunker—her looks, her pride in New England, her religion, even (a typical debunker's touch) her sex-life: she is not allowed the dignity of having loved her husband, but merely of having "cohabited" with "that potent but flabby bedfellow."

I HAVE not space to answer all these attacks. Some answer themselves. It is a pity that the author's prejudice (curious how that word keeps cropping up) has prevented him from appreciating Mrs. Stowe's remarkable gifts, or her deep sincerity. But what of his more germane charges? I have reread *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the light of these, and feel that here too he has been unfair. This is unfortunate in that it mars some otherwise useful and sensible sections in Mr. Furnas's book. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has many faults. It is clumsy, verbose, and sentimental. But it is not absurd, as was *l'oncletomerie* of the stage versions which so magnified its reputation round

* *Ancestors and Immigrants: a changing New England tradition.* By BARBARA MILLER SOLOMON. Harvard University Press and Cumberlege. 38s.

† *Goodbye to Uncle Tom.* By J. C. FURNAS. Secker and Warburg. 30s.

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the world. Mr. Furnas dwells on these, despite the fact that Mrs. Stowe did not approve of them and was responsible for them only in the most indirect manner. Her novel is inaccurate in many particulars. But it is not wildly wrong, even on the other evidence presented by Mr. Furnas—except perhaps in overestimating the rapidity with which the Negro might better himself by means of education. If this was naïve, was it also vicious? Mrs. Stowe suggests, through the mouth of Eliza's mulatto husband, that the Negro could find himself a new home and a new nationality by leaving America and going to Liberia. Perhaps this idea was a mask for prejudice; perhaps it was altogether impracticable, even in 1852. But Mrs. Stowe was by no means the only person, white or coloured, who advocated some such scheme at the time. Ten years after her book was published, Abraham Lincoln was still wondering whether this might not be the best solution to the Negro problem in America. Mrs. Stowe used words like *blood*, *race*, and *superiority*. But what other, nicely disinfected, words were available to her in 1852? "Superiority" as an environmental fact was undeniable in her generation; if she employed the expression loosely, she was in the main astonishingly free from the sins Mr. Furnas would lay at her door.

My point is really the same as the one made by Mr. Furnas in his later chapters, which are well worth reading when he gets away from *l'oncletomerie*. It is that only the moral issues involved in the whole question are simple, and that everything else is diabolically complicated, including terminology. For Mrs. Stowe the major moral issue was that of slavery. On that her mind was clear. On what was to be done for the Negro, and by the Negro for himself, after emancipation, she was no clearer than Lincoln or many, many others (I am puzzled to decide what line of action Mr. Furnas would have followed if he had been one of her contemporaries). As he remarks, we have hardly any reliable data to go upon—a little genetic information, and various layers of inference and conjecture. Mr. Furnas does his best to define his vocabulary. Yet he speaks of *blood-groups*, and of an American Negro *race*: a century hence, will some critic belabour him in his turn as a propagator of Tomfoolery? Probably not; he is obviously a man of goodwill—unless that too is to be deplored? Mrs. Stowe, we remember, expected that her novel would soothe the Southerners and annoy the Abolitionists. W. E. B. DuBois, a doughty champion of his people, is nevertheless taken to task by Mr. Furnas for having spoken of the Negro as "among the most lovable of men." It is all a tangle in the liberal camp (like this sentence), where yesterday's

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meat is today's poison and not even the sentries are certain of the password. Perhaps, Mr. Furnas suggests, we shall eventually discover that there *are* fairly fundamental differences between American whites and Negroes (insofar as the two will be distinguishable), and that the Negroes have a slightly lower level of intelligence. His conclusion? That such a result would not in the least affect the moral obligation to give equal opportunities to all men in his country. I applaud him for stating that so firmly. So, I am sure, would Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Marcus Cunliffe

THE MODERN MOVEMENT

ACCORDING to Mr. Eliot's foreword, Professor Chiari's is the first book in English about Mallarmé; which is a pity, because it does not seem, to me at least, to be a very good book.* It is largely composed of that kind of philosophising about poetry which, when compared to the actual utterances of poets, appears strangely elevated, grandiose, and sublime; and has, unfortunately, the paradoxical and unexpected result of making the poetry shrink. Compared to the assertions made about it, the poetry is a curious anti-climax and much, much less exciting than the criticism.

> *The existence of Mallarmé's imaginary world is only the distance which separates abolished reality from its projection towards the absolute, it is a duration which is not part of the world, but is only the poet's will embodied in transmuted language, all-powerful and representing all that has been—that is to say, creation. . . . The poet, in his act of replacing creation by his will, repeats God's act, is the equal of God. That was Mallarmé's dream, the dream which fuses into oneness absolute subjectivism and the transcendental ego. Nothing is, which is not the absolute subject; and the subject annihilates reality and bases his existence in his attempt to reach, from willed non-being, a mode of being which is the creative act and which, therefore, makes the poet self-created like God.*

That seems to me a fair example of Professor Chiari's method and, as far as I can gather, of his thought. I cannot, incidentally, understand the first sentence quoted at all, and hesitate to believe that the existence of an imaginary world can be at the same time a duration, the poet's will, and creation. There is a point in Professor Chiari's argument where no less than twenty-five separate poets and philosophers are invoked in two pages and the effect on a reader who has the kind of mind which is attracted to poetry in the first place must surely be to produce a feeling of near panic.

Yet the subject of his book is a fascinating one. Baudelaire brought the world of modern poetry into existence; Mallarmé provided modern poetry with a basic technique—imagist, anti-syntactical, compressed, suggestive, and discontinuous—and both of them acknowledged in the most fulsome terms their debt to a meretricious, frequently vulgar, and almost always superficial versifier, Edgar Allan Poe. That could be a fascinating problem with which to while away a winter or two. Further, and this seems to me even more fascinating, though Professor Chiari pays no attention to it: Baudelaire, who prayed nightly to Edgar Allan Poe, published exactly one hundred years ago a book of poems which is still ticking away like a time-bomb and is perhaps a specifically contemporary influence because the symbolists, also basing themselves on Poe (and Baudelaire), and their later English admirers until the advent of Mr. Eliot, diverted attention from what precisely he had done; thus giving us the inestimable benefit of having him as a contemporary—a much more contemporary figure than Valéry for example, who must surely strike most of us as a good deal more remote.

MR. ELIOT hints at this, a different synthesis from Professor Chiari's, only in the last paragraph of his preface. After acknowledging that he does not think that "the work of some modern writers would be quite what it is (I am thinking of Rilke for example, and of some of my own later work) or that, if it was the same, it would find a public prepared for it" except for the attitude of Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Valéry—all influenced by Poe—to their own work, he goes on:

> *This of course is not the whole story. Baudelaire would have been a great poet in any case, a greater than Poe; and much more became possible because of Baudelaire—I am*

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* *Symbolisme from Poe to Mallarmé: The Growth of a Myth.* By JOSEPH CHIARI. Foreword by T. S. ELIOT. Rockliff. 28s.

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thinking of Laforgue, Corbière and Rimbaud —than is found in the poetic current examined in this book.

If we add his own and the names of Yeats and Auden to those of the four French poets mentioned, we get a picture of the current of modern poetry which really affects us; a poetry of immediacy of experience, of the world and the streets and psychology, which is really "the modern movement," and which is symbolist only in technique (and then only if we call the use of disassociated images and the dropping of the circumlocutions of comparison, symbolist devices). After all, the point about modern poetry is that it did *not* take Verlaine's advice:

Fuis du plus loin la Pointe assassine,
L'Esprit cruel et le Rire impure,
Qui font pleurer les yeux de l'Azur,
Et tout cet ail de basse cuisine.

The precise glory of modern poetry is that it took for its subject the boredom, the corruption, the nervous tension, and the intractability of experience. With all due respect, Valéry's own description of Baudelaire ("*tout y est charme, musique*" . . . etc.) sounds just like poor Arthur Symons; and Yeats's great heroism is proved surely by the fact that he fought his way back from a symbolist or near-symbolist position, and that ultimately he did lie down

where all the ladders start
In the foul rag and bone shop of the heart.

Speaking purely of England we may hope that the true modern movement will continue if anything does, with Dylan Thomas and other neo-symbolists receding: though of course the value of a poetry of psychology and experience of the contemporary world depends on how interesting the poet's mind and his experience happens to be, and on how much he really lives out the dualities which the modern world imposes.

But one must not blame Professor Chiari for not having written a different book about something else, though it is legitimate to express disappointment in the one he has written. The mind and the æsthetic of Mallarmé (and I confess those of Valéry also) seem to me, from the little I know of them, to be narrow, retreating, and cold, and his capacity for the sort of experience which makes modern poetry unique and wonderful altogether less than that of, say, Baudelaire or Yeats. Yet he occupies a central position in the poetic history of the last hundred years. Having read Professor Chiari's book with care I must confess I am only a little the wiser about him.

Anthony Cronin

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ABOUT OUR AUTHORS

Burns Singer has sent us the following autobiographical note:

"Born in 1928, a New York mongrel, I was brought to Scotland as a young child, and there educated. Two terms were enough to convince me that a full course of Eng. Lit. at Glasgow University would kill my interest in English Literature and cripple whatever talent might then have been mine. So I left Scotland for London where, at the age of seventeen, I found myself teaching mathematics to helpless adolescents at a dubious private school. The headmaster died of a heart attack, perhaps precipitated by my incompetence, and I fled to Cornwall where I lived in a tent and was lucky enough to come under the tutelage of W. S. Graham. Two years in Europe followed. The paternal interest of the painter Wols is all I care to recall of this miserable period. On return to Glasgow I took up Zoology because, as I told the Master of Studies, I wanted 'to write poems about animals.' From there to Aberdeen as a very junior member of the Scottish Home Department's Marine Laboratory, a job I was able to stick for four years because it involved considerable periods at sea. In the end, however, even they couldn't compensate for the demoralisation I suffered ashore. Therefore to London where, during the past sixteen months, I have been writing unsteadily but, looking back on it, very plentifully.

"I first met MacDiarmid when I was fourteen. We came to see quite a lot of one another but we have not been on speaking terms for the past five and a half years. I should like to point out that, since this essay was written, Mr. MacDiarmid has joined other British Marxists in repudiating recent Soviet action in Hungary, and has dissociated himself from the British Communist Party's endorsement of it. (See Correspondence, *New Statesman and Nation*, December 1st, 1956.)"

Lawrence Alloway. Born 1926. Deputy Director of the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. English Correspondent of *Art News* (U.S.). Author of *Nine Abstract Artists*. In preparation: a study of *The Paintings and Sculpture of William Turnbull* (for publication in the summer) and a book on popular movies.

A. J. P. Taylor. Fellow and Tutor in Modern History at Magdalen College, Oxford. Was educated at Bootham School, York, and was for some years lecturer at the University of Manchester. . . . Leslie A. Fiedler is spending this year at Princeton University where he is the Christian Gauss Visiting Professor of Literature. A collection of his essays, *The End of Innocence*, was published last year in the U.S. . . . Colin MacInnes' new novel, *City of Spades*, will be published in the late spring by MacGibbon and Kee. His essays on Stephen Tennant and Sidney Nolan have appeared in previous issues of this magazine. . . . Daniel Lerner is Professor at the Centre for International Studies, associated with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. . . . Herbert Passin, an American anthropologist who has been living in Japan for the past ten years, reports regularly on the Far East for Encounter. . . . Anthony Cronin, whose article, "A Massacre of Authors," appeared in our April 1956 issue, is now literary editor of *Time and Tide*. . . . Christopher Sykes, Hilary Corke, and Marcus Cunliffe are regular contributors to our books section.

Encounter is published by
Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd.
7 John Street, Bloomsbury, London, W.C.1.
for
THE CONGRESS FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM
104 Boulevard Haussmann, Paris 8, France

President of the Executive Committee
Denis de Rougemont

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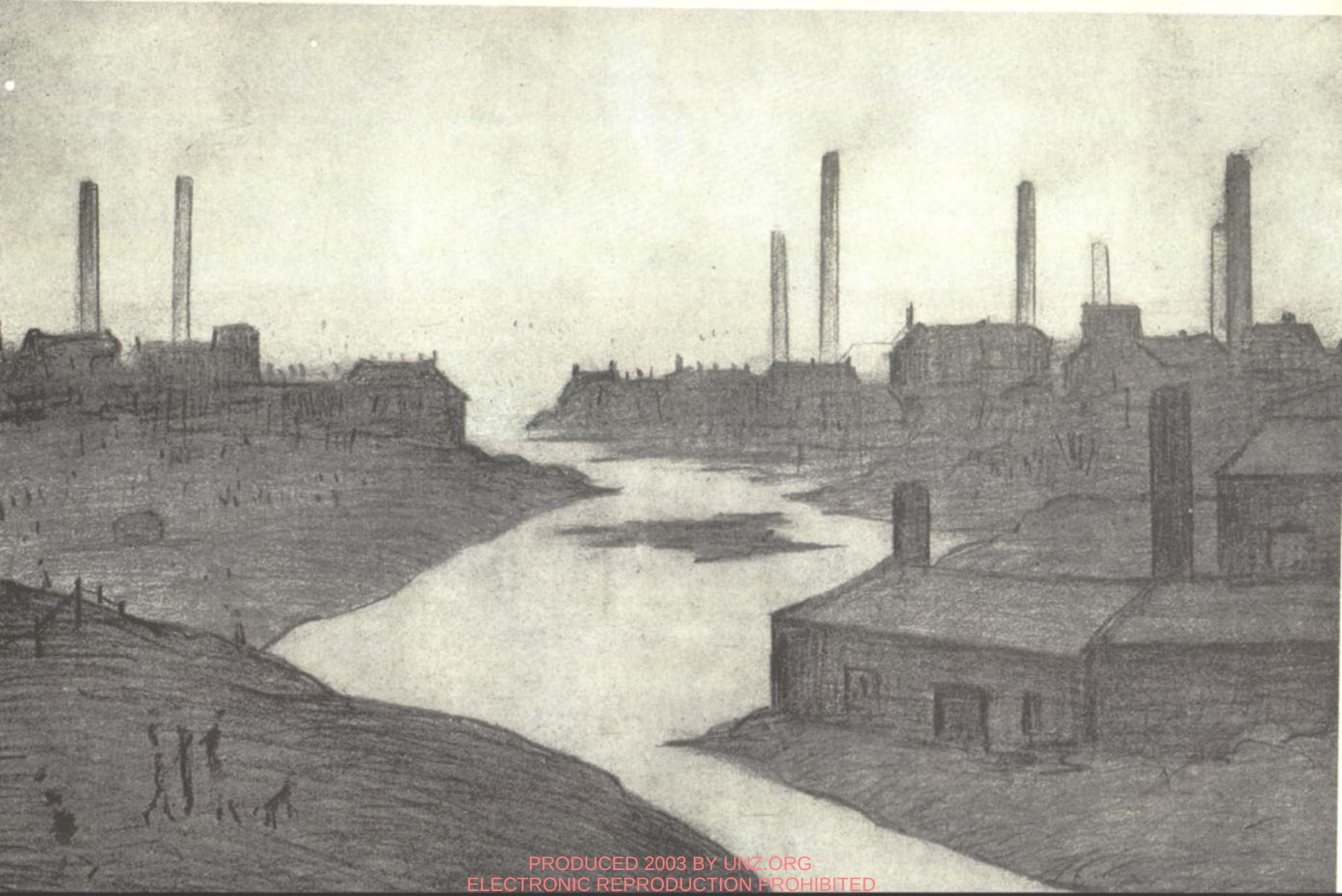

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